

### Continuing the Adventure . . .

Last week was another great time together. I don't know about you, but my prayers about the sacrifices I need to make to be more devoted to this group were difficult to pray. There's so much I'm forced to be dedicated to, I'm evaluating what changes I'm going to have to make so I can be as devoted as God wants me to be to Him and this group. Maybe you're in the same boat. This is something I'll continue to work on during the months we're together because I'm committed to arriving with you at our destination of Christian Community. If we all are committed, this trip will be the time of our lives.

### Break the Ice (10-15 minutes)

*[LEADER: Tell the group this is the last session of your first study, which is designed to help them know how they can help each other grow spiritually. Mention that the group will begin a new study the next time you meet. Choose at least two of the three icebreakers below to engage with your group. Make sure everyone answers the final question.]*

1. Did your parents ever tell you, "Wait until you're older; you'll understand then"? Explain an instance from your life in which you now know this advice to be true.
  
2. If you could choose any person in the world to mentor you, who would that person be? Why would you choose him or her?
  
3. Of the list below, which person would you most like to influence and why?
  - My teenager – making some bad decisions
  - My child's teacher – not sure how to do the job
  - My parents – didn't have life training themselves when it was most needed
  - My boss – needs to understand the employees' situations better
  - My best friend – is out of control!
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - is gifted and could accomplish greater things with help
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Discover (20-25 minutes)

Here we are at our final destination, the Isle of Christian Community. On this journey, we've collected the tools we need to live on this island. We are about to go ashore, but to really experience it, we're going to have to stay a while.

As our ship enters the bay, we roll into a concert. People are dancing, singing, and enjoying life. No one seems to be alone. Everyone seems connected on these exotic shores. The entire group is holding signs high above their heads welcoming us to their isle of elation. Some of the signs reveal clues about the holder's personal story. One reads, "Found Jesus here!" Another says, "Sweeter than the Big Apple." Another delivers this thought provoking message,

“Still Struggling, But No Longer Alone.” A creative type holds this descriptive declaration, “Colors Beyond Comprehension.” But my personal favorite simply reads, “Wouldn’t go Back!” Some of these beach dwellers seem to have come to shore with baggage that has been replaced by peace of mind and lifelong friendships. Others, who were obviously burned by life, now have a healthy, healed, and hopeful future. We are overjoyed as we walk barefoot in the sand with the sun warming our faces. Returning to our lonelier world and substandard life is no longer an option.

Experiencing Christian Community, as you have concluded by now, demands more from us than just attending meetings. It requires a heart connection between group members as well as a personal transformation and the ongoing redemptive work of the Holy Spirit. Without personal transformation the group cannot reach deep heart connection. Only when we become more like Christ can we connect with each other in truly fantastic ways. So, we’re going to end our first six weeks of group life discovering how we can be transformed individually and how the group can assist in that process.

## **Renovation 101: Required Tool List**

*[LEADER: Ask a different person to read each of the following passages. Be sure to leave at least 15 minutes for the “Connecting” segment at the end of your time together.]*

“All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3: 16-17

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”

Proverbs 27:17

“And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, [growing] into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness.”

Ephesians 4: 11-13

“Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”

James 1: 2-4

“Rather, train yourself in godliness, for, the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

1 Timothy 4: 7B-8

*[LEADER: There is a long list of questions between this section and the next. You know your group well enough now to recognize which questions will be most appropriate for them. Answer as many as time will allow. The strongest application questions appear in the "Embracing the Truth" section. It will help to highlight in advance the questions you don't want to miss.]*

1. Each of the passages above reveals one tool used by God to renovate a person's heart. Name the five tools God uses to transform us. Remember, you'll find one in each of the passages above.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	

2. In 2 Timothy 3: 16-17, what does "teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness" mean? What do these things prepare us for?
3. Do you know someone who has really allowed the Bible to shape his or her life? Describe the attitudes and actions that this person portrays that lead you to believe the Bible is his or her guide for life.
4. How has the Bible shaped our generation's view of life and the lifestyle we should live? How has it shaped you personally?
5. Have you ever been involved in an activity in which you were required to complete certain tasks for the team to be successful? Explain the activity. Describe what you were personally held accountable for in that activity.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sports Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Academic Team or Speaking Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Leadership Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Singing or Drama Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Other:

6. According to James 1: 2-4, we are to be joyful even during difficult times. Why is it hard to be joyful when the trials of life blindsides us? Is there a difference between being joyful *for* the trials and being joyful *in* the trials? If so, what's the difference?
7. How can each of us help one another grow in our faith during hard times instead of losing our faith? According to verse 4, what is the outcome of finding God in the midst of our adversity?

8. Name the spiritual disciplines (really, privileges) you think all Christ-followers should be involved in?

## **Apply** (10-15 minutes)

*[LEADER: This section focuses on encouraging group members to identify spiritual disciplines that they will commit to carry out for the benefit of the group.]*

1. Why are people sometimes hesitant to be held accountable? What keeps you from wanting accountability in your life?
2. Think about how spiritual gifts are used between group members to build one another up. If someone in our small group was going through a divorce, how would someone with the gift of mercy use that gift to build up that person? What about the gifts of teaching, helps, leadership, or other gifts?
3. Which of the five tools you found in the Bible passages above has God used most in your life to date? How has it helped or changed you?
4. For you to become all that God wants you to become and for our group to truly become a Christian Community, it's going to take some work on your part. Which of the spiritual disciplines will you commit to carry out? Would you like to be held accountable? If so, who would you like to be accountable to?

## **Connecting** (15 minutes)

*[LEADER: This final "Connecting" time will involve a very special commissioning ceremony for your group. As you spend time commissioning one another, remind group members that to commission someone is to empower that person to accomplish what he or she is being commissioned to do. Remind them that they are being commissioned to use all the tools discussed over the last six sessions to make this group all it is meant to be.]*

As we continue together in our group, we'll want to be certain we use all that we have discovered on our journey together to help one another grow. Commission one another for the part each of you will play in the group by standing in a circle and holding hands. The leader and/or apprentice should pray specifically for each member in the group by name. Feel free to lay hands on each individual as they are being prayed for.

*[LEADER: Give group members the opportunity to reflect together on the last six weeks. Ask volunteers to share what they've learned and how they plan to integrate this learning into their lives. Take a few minutes before you close this final session to discuss how your group will continue, so you can carry on within this community of friends as you continue to move toward a truly redemptive Christian Community.]*

1. For six weeks, we've shared an intimate and unique experience. Look back over the life of this study and evaluate your journey. Where were you at the beginning of this journey? How has living in Christian Community affected your life?

2. Take turns sharing favorite memories from your time together. What will you never forget?
3. Look ahead to the future of your group and decide how you will continue living together in Christian Community. When will you meet again? What will you study?
4. Record prayer requests in the space below. Pray for the future direction of the group and for the person who is not yet a part of your group. Make sure you spend some time thanking God for the invaluable friendships you have made and the lessons you have learned throughout this experience.

Prayer Requests:

## **Sneak Peek**

Next time we meet, we'll start using the Sermon Based Study. Make sure to use the notes sheet and homework on the back of the worship program.

YOUR JOURNEY TOGETHER HAS ONLY BEGUN . . .