

**GROUP. LIFE.**  
**Family Time**  
**Mark 1 - 2**

Brief review of last week: Clocks and Calendars.

**What you build your SCHEDULE around is what you are building your LIFE upon.**

**Illustration:** Picture and story of woman with “necrotic toe.” [WARNING @ PIC]

- Read TEXT about the picture before I show the picture.
- Point out that SHE HAD PAINTED HER DEAD TOENAILS! [Daniel’s reply!]
- We express the same kind of DENIAL about our DEAD END SCHEDULES!
  - \*We do not even KNOW what really needs to change in our schedules.
  - I often choose THE wrong thing when trying to make things right!

**Proverbs 16:25 NASB**

**25 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.**

\*But – Praise God – there is a WAY OUT of this denial that leads to death!

**The commitment to follow Jesus always leads to a RADICAL CHANGE in the way that we use our TIME.**

REVIEW OUR VISION: Helping people to find and follow Jesus. [Finding Jesus . . .]

\*Jesus allowed the disciples to get to know him before he called them to a point of COMMITMENT. They had a part in these developing friendships. **John 1:35-42 NLT**  
**35 The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37 When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"). 42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John--but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter").**

**Sometime later,** Jesus CALLS them to FOLLOW him! THIS was the GAME CHANGER!

So, has Jesus CALLED you to himself, and HOW has YOUR schedule changed SINCE you committed your life to Christ?

If you have committed your life to Christ, then it is no longer LIFE AS USUAL. Everything changes to one degree or another once you commit your life to Christ!

\*He will lead you to PLACES that you would never have gone on your own!

\*He will help you make DISCOVERIES that you could not have made alone.

\*He will also ALWAYS lead you to PEOPLE that NEED YOU and that YOU NEED!

**You CANNOT SEPARATE your commitment to CHRIST from your commitment to Christian COMMUNITY!**

**When Jesus calls you to himself, he calls you to others that he has called as well. You were NEVER DESIGNED to GROW ALONE!** Jesus will lead you into RELATIONSHIPS with PEOPLE who will become PRECIOUS to you, and VITAL to your spiritual health! **[Christ-Centered FRIENDSHIPS!]** Do you realize that one of the FIRST THINGS that Jesus did in his ministry was to begin BUILDING A SMALL GROUP? We see this at the beginning of all four of the Gospels. Jesus called 12 MEN to be the CORE GROUP of people around whom he would build his ministry. (Even before he chose those 12 men, he was steadily bringing them into fellowship with other disciples!) They became the first N.T. small group. There would be MANY MORE to follow! When the church began to multiply after the DAY OF PENTECOST, the book of Acts tells us that those first Christians started MEETING TOGETHER in their HOMES EVERY WEEK! This was the CONTINUATION of what Jesus had started in his own ministry.

Jesus knew that the best way to get people to GROW was to lead the way for them to GET TOGETHER! This reveals a common reality that I see throughout the New Testament. It is also a CONSTANT in the gospel accounts of Jesus's ministry.

**Mark 1:20-21, 29 NLT**

20 He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men. 21 **Jesus and his companions** went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach. . . 29 After Jesus left the synagogue **with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew's home.**

Peter and Andrew actually accepted the call WHILE THEY WERE FISHING, and they threw down their nets and followed Christ right away. (You KNOW that was a miracle!) A bit further down the shore, Jesus called the Sons of Thunder to follow him while they were mending nets (after the BIG CATCH that Jesus caused had broken their nets?) Now, this illustrates the fact that **SOME of the people that Jesus will call you to spend time with will be PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU.** They will have the same interests and background as you, and you will feel RIGHT AT HOME with them. This will be fun. But then, **Jesus will also call other people to himself who will be RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM YOU,** and he will expect you to spend time with them as well. This is one thing that makes Christian community such a GOOD THING. **Mark 2:13-14 NLT**

13 Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his

tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him.

Imagine the fishermen's surprise when Jesus calls MATTHEW the TAX COLLECTOR to be one of the TWELVE. I bet that they knew him right away because he probably had EXTORTED some of their hard-earned money from them at some point in their past. Remember, Tax Collectors were KNOWN for being DISHONEST SCOUNDRELS! How would you like to be thrown in with people like that? Guess what, YOU HAVE BEEN! [HIDE YOUR PURSE! We are ALL recovering hypocrites!] Every small group is composed of people who are ALIKE in some ways, but DIFFERENT in most ways. This is the BEAUTY of the BODY OF CHRIST. He helps us learn to function properly in society by pulling us together around our COMMON COMMITMENT to CHRIST! Has this happened to you in your life? If not, then I hope that you will not waste another week without it!

\*This can happen within a CONTEXT that is created by the CHURCH.

\*This can happen ORGANICALLY with Christ-centered friends you already have!

WHY DOES JESUS LEAD US INTO GROUP LIFE WHEN HE CALLS US TO HIMSELF?

\*Time with Jesus alone was never his only goal. It was the CORE but not the END GOAL. Intimacy with Jesus always leads to intimacy with other believers.

**\*He calls us to LEARN TOGETHER.**

-Constantly under his teaching! [Sermon on the Mount; Private explanations]

**\*He calls us to WORK TOGETHER.** [4 men and a blanket/Feeding the 5,000]

-Shared life experiences create INTIMATE BONDS of FRIENDSHIP!

-Group life gives us a greater experience of the WORK of Jesus in this world.

\*They were forced to see needs they would have ignored, missed, or avoided.

--The Leper and the demon possessed man

--Life Groups PRESS us into constant opportunities to do the work of God

There is another thing that I have noticed about just how Jesus changes the way that his followers spend their time, even and ESPECIALLY while in community:

**We must not separate Christian community from the world!**

**\*He calls us to GO TOGETHER! Mark 3:13-14; 6:7 NIV**

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach. 6:7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out **two by two** . . .

Did you notice how quickly Jesus brought the disciples into a number of DIFFERENT ENCOUNTERS with people who were very FAR FROM GOD? Jesus MADE SURE that his disciples WENT OUT TOGETHER. This is important! He wants those who do not know him to SEE his LIFE in the RELATIONSHIPS that Christians have with one

another. Going together also allows us to mutually ENCOURAGE, PRAY FOR, and GUARD one another. [[My Christian friendships as a teenager; CHC mission teams](#)]

When Jesus brought his disciples to the synagogue, he wanted them to SEE and LOVE those who desperately needed him. I mean, just one verse after he calls the fishermen, he has them come FACE TO FACE with a man who is possessed with a demon. And right after Jesus calls Matthew to follow him, they wind up at Matthew's house with a CROWD OF PARTY ANIMAL PAGANS! **Mark 2:15 NLT**

I think this is one aspect of Small Groups at CHC that we really need to revisit. We MUST MAKE ROOM in our lives for those who are far from God to come in and see and hear what God is doing in our lives. The only way that we can accomplish this is by BEING TOGETHER with one another in settings where people are FAR FROM GOD as well as by INVITING OUTSIDERS into our groups so that they can experience life with us in our homes. In fact, when I look at this very passage that we have been studying, I see an amazing, beautiful truth: **JESUS LOVES TO TURN OUR HOMES INTO HOUSES OF HEALING! Mark 1:29-34 NLT**

[29 After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew's home. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. 31 So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them. 32 That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. 33 The whole town gathered at the door to watch. 34 So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.](#)

**\*Note how many MIRACLES occur in HOMES rather than just in CHURCH!**

I love what happens in our homes during Small Group. I have seen literal miracles in my home (and in the homes of other group members) when we have met together. I have seen people give their heart to Christ, I have seen families brought to tears and healing in remarkable prayer times, and I have seen God heal some who were sick in direct answer to prayer! All of this happened in my home because we made the CHOICE to GET TOGETHER in the name of Christ Jesus! I want to make it clear: **Small group will UPSET the SCHEDULE of your home.** Fathers and Mothers, some of your family members may not be too happy with this at first, but I urge you to PRESS ON! My kids now LOVE small group because of how God has used it in our lives. But it was a CHOICE that we made that TOOK PRECEDENCE over things like BASEBALL and SOCCER and OPTIONAL WORK SCHEDULES. We committed together to let this be a centerpiece of our lives. **We chose to BUILD OUR SCHEDULES AROUND SMALL GROUP, rather than building our small group around our schedule!** It has been more than worth it!

ONE FINAL QUESTION: **How will you EVER CHOOSE to spend your time with your SPIRITUAL FAMILY when you are not even spending adequate time with the FAMILY that you ALREADY HAVE?**

**Your schedule is a CRUCIAL CONSIDERATION in your SPIRITUAL GROWTH, and your decision to TRUST Jesus as your LORD is the KEY to every aspect of your HEALTH.** I hope that this series has stirred you to really THINK about how you are spending your time, and that you will make some necessary CHANGES in those areas where God has shown you that you are far weaker than you should be.

To end our message today, I want to ask you four important questions that have to do with your schedule as it relates to FAMILY GROUP LIFE at CHC:

WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR YOU TO BUILD YOUR SCHEDULE AROUND GROUP LIFE?

- What will you have to GIVE UP?
- What will you have to ADJUST?
- What will it COST you and your family to IGNORE group life in your schedule?

If Jesus is truly the LORD of your LIFE, then you will give him FULL CONTROL of your SCHEDULE for HIS GLORY and for the GOOD of you, your family, God's family, and a lost world!

Let's pray.