

LIFE GROUPS
Ruts and Routines
Mark 1-2

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CHC HERNANDO! [Today marks our 4-Year anniversary at HMS in Hernando.] We have so much to be grateful for, and so much to look forward to by faith! God is good! Let's thank God together in prayer right now. [Pray]

Opening Illustration to message:

My grandfather used to take his entire family to the closest "big town" in Arkansas by putting his tires into deep ruts in the mud that ran all the way from Brasfield to Brinkley (@10 miles!). Those were some reliable ruts!

What are the RUTS and ROUTINES of your life, and WHERE are they leading you?

*All of us travel in some kind of ruts.

*Ruts are not always bad.

*Just remember: Ruts are easier to get INTO than they are to get OUT OF!

-Be careful what ruts you get your tires into.

*Make sure that you choose ruts that are on the RIGHT ROUTES.

-All ruts lead somewhere!

*Make sure that you travel ruts with the right people!

-Some ruts are only traveled by rough people headed for rough places!

Mark 1:16-19 NLT

16 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 17 Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" 18 And they left their nets at once and followed him. 19 A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets.

One of the FIRST THINGS that Jesus did in his ministry was to form a SMALL GROUP!

-He knew that the best way to grow people spiritually was to get them together!

-He knew how this would affect HIM. [Inconvenience/Slower pace]

*Illustration: Teaching my kids how to fish.

-He knew how this would affect THEM. [New experiences/Difficult challenges]

-He knew especially how this would affect one of their most precious treasures!

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

*Time is a RUT ISSUE: What are your regular ruts? [**Hobbies/Habits/etc.**]

-SCHEDULES are like ruts: They are INTENTIONAL ROUTINES.

-Our schedules are always LEADING US . . . somewhere! [Fishermen FISH]

- New SCHEDULES can lead to NEW SKILLS. [Fishers of MEN!]
- *Will always feel awkward at first! **[Like getting into a group!]**

*What you build your schedule AROUND is what you are building your life UPON!
Psalm 90:10,12 NIV

10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. ... 12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

- “Number” = “to Reckon or ASSIGN/APPOINT”
- This means that we must give each day a PURPOSE; Schedule days wisely!

- *Schedules reveal PRIORITIES! **[What does your schedule reveal about you?]**
- ~You cannot travel in TWO ruts (or abide by 2 schedules) at the same time!
- Does your schedule SERVE your intentions, or does it RULE you?
- What does your schedule reveal about your SPIRITUAL LIFE?

*Schedules can also CREATE priorities! **[What do you want your schedule to create?]**

- Lisa and I: Our decision about our family schedule. Stop the madness!
- What changes do you need to make in your schedule to grow your faith?
- *SERIES: A LIFE WITHOUT SUNDAYS!
- PARENTS: When you choose to build LIFE GROUP into your life, you are making a choice that will affect your family’s spiritual life for good, but . . .
- *Some of them may not be happy about it at first. PRESS THROUGH!

The commitment to follow Jesus always leads us to spend time with others that have made the same commitment.

*Jesus INSURES that this will happen. He calls others near us to be with him so that they can be with us as we are with him! Are you with me?

- Sometimes, he calls others that are LIKE us.
 [Simon, Andrew, James, and John – All 4 were fishermen!]
- Sometimes he calls others that are NOTHING like us! **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.

- *Our fellowship in church MUST NOT simply be based on our similar backgrounds.
- God calls us to rub shoulders with people of every kind!
- The early church was filled with free men, slaves, women, rich, and poor!
- One of our great challenges at CHC is to create a SAFE PLACE for all people!

The commitment to follow Jesus also creates opportunities for spending time with those who are far from God.

*When Jesus controls your schedule, it will UPSET the routines of your HOME!

-He will turn your home into a HOUSE 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.

*Jesus brought HEALING to Peter's own family! [His mother-in-law?]

-The ATE together in his home. [This was a big crowd!]

*Jesus brought SICK and HURTING people into Peter's home!

-They were exposed to those illnesses!

-They saw spiritual realities they had never seen before! [Demons]

*Matthew gave them their closest look ever at the "far from God" crowd.

Mark 2:15 NLT

15 Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.)

~Matthew asked Jesus and the other disciples to come to his home.

-They heard and felt the needs and pains of their hearts.

-They got their first taste of REJECTION by the religious crowd!

LIFE GROUP will CHANGE your LIFE because it will CHANGE your ROUTINES!

Let me end this message by challenging you with 3 questions:

*What will you have to GIVE UP to build LIFE GROUP into your schedule?

*What will you have to ADJUST to build LIFE GROUP into your schedule?

*What will it COST you to IGNORE LIFE GROUP in your schedule?

Let's pray.

FACILITATION GUIDE
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MAIN POINT of MESSAGE:

Our schedules do not RULE us as much as they REVEAL us. What do your schedules reveal about your spiritual life and health? Jesus initiated Life Groups for his followers to help them grow in their faith. We must let Jesus build Life Groups as a ROUTINE in our schedule, or our regular routines will become ruts that may take us farther away from God. LET JESUS RULE YOUR RUTS!

ICEBREAKER:

What is your favorite memory (funny or sweet) that you experienced with friends growing up?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What are some of the primary “ruts” in your schedule?
2. How are your current ruts affecting your spiritual life? Family life?
3. READ MARK 1:16-19. How do you think Jesus’ invitation affected the disciple’s USE of time? Do you think it was hard for them? Why? Share what YOU have had to adjust or give up in order to attend group.
4. READ Psalm 90:10, 12. How intentional are you about appointing a purpose to your days (use of time)? Why is this important?
5. READ MARK 1:16-19 and MARK 2:13-14. How uncomfortable do you think it was for those fishermen to be in a group with the Tax Collector? How does it affect you to be around people of a different race? A different church background? A different culture? Why is it important for us to PUSH PAST these discomforts?
6. READ MARK 2:15. Why is it important for us to invite OUTSIDERS into group with us? Have you done this?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

*Share stories of how you have seen your home turn into a HOUSE OF HEALING through Life Group.

*Acknowledge the things that make regular attendance at Life Group difficult. Pray for one another over these challenges.

*Make a list of people that are not believers that you can INVEST IN and INVITE (to LIFE GROUP and to CHC)