

Small Group Guide: Week 3: Bullseye



Summary:

Title: Prioritizing Relationships: A Path to Spiritual Growth

This sermon explored the importance of prioritizing relationships in our spiritual journey, using the Apostle Paul's life as an example. It emphasizes how our closest relationships should reflect our commitment to Christ and how we can influence others while maintaining healthy boundaries. The sermon discusses the concept of concentric circles of relationships, with God at the center, and how this model can help believers navigate their interactions with others while growing in faith.

Key Takeaways:

1. Our relationships should be prioritized like a target, with God at the center.
2. Who we spend time with greatly influences our faith and character.
3. We are called to both be influenced by wise people and to influence others positively.
4. Paul's life demonstrates how to prioritize relationships in alignment with our faith.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?
2. The sermon mentioned a "target" model for relationships. How does your current relationship structure compare to this model?
3. Reflect on Proverbs 13:20: "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed." How have you seen this play out in your own life?
4. How did Paul's encounter with Jesus change his relationships and priorities? What can we learn from this?
5. The sermon mentions Barnabas bringing Paul into the fold of disciples. Have you ever had a "Barnabas" in your life? Have you ever been a "Barnabas" to someone else?
6. How do you balance maintaining relationships with non-believers (circle of concern) while not being negatively influenced by them?
7. In what ways can we be more intentional about influencing the "world" (those who don't know us) positively for Christ?

Practical Applications:

1. Relationship Audit: Take some time this week to evaluate your relationships. Who belongs in your "circle of influence"? Are there any relationships that need boundaries or reevaluation?
2. Mentorship: Consider either finding a mentor to help you grow in your faith or becoming a mentor to someone else. Discuss potential steps to make this happen.
3. Influence Challenge: Choose one person in your "circle of concern" and pray about how you can positively influence them towards Christ this week. Share your plan with the group.
4. World Impact: Brainstorm ways your group can collectively make a positive impact on your community, representing Christ well to those who don't know you.
5. Scripture Meditation: Spend time reflecting on Matthew 22:36-39 and Matthew 28:19-20. How can you better live out these commands in your daily life?

Closing Prayer

Encourage group members to share prayer requests and pray for each other's growth in prioritizing relationships according to God's will.

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



Day 1: Encountering Christ

Reading: Acts 9:1-19

Devotional:

Paul's dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus reminds us that God can transform even the most unlikely individuals. Like Paul, we may have areas in our lives where we're resistant or even hostile to God's work. Today, reflect on your own "Damascus road" moments. How has Christ revealed Himself to you? Are there areas where you're still resisting His call? Ask God to open your spiritual eyes and give you the courage to respond to His voice, even if it means a radical change in direction.

Day 2: Walking with the Wise

Reading: Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33

Devotional:

The company we keep profoundly influences our spiritual journey. Paul's life was transformed not only by his encounter with Jesus but also through relationships with believers like Barnabas and Timothy. Consider the influences in your own life. Who are the "wise" people God has placed around you to help you grow? Conversely, are there relationships that may be hindering your spiritual progress? Pray for discernment in your friendships and the courage to prioritize relationships that draw you closer to Christ.

Day 3: Leaving the Old Behind

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Devotional:

Paul's conversion meant leaving behind his old identity as a persecutor of the church. When we encounter Christ, we too are called to leave our old ways behind. What aspects of your old self is God calling you to release? Remember, this isn't about self-improvement, but about allowing God's transforming power to work in you. Thank God for the new creation He is making you to be and ask for His strength to embrace your new identity in Christ.

Day 4: Suffering for Christ

Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:23-30; Romans 5:3-5

Devotional:

Paul's ministry was marked by intense suffering, yet he remained faithful. In our own lives, we may face trials that test our faith. How do you respond to suffering? Do you see it as an opportunity for growth and a deeper reliance on God? Reflect on a current challenge you're facing. How might God be using this difficulty to shape your character and deepen your faith? Ask for the grace to persevere and the wisdom to see God's hand even in your struggles.

Day 5: Living on Mission

Reading: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

Devotional:

Paul's life was radically reoriented around the mission of spreading the Gospel. As followers of Christ, we too are called to be on mission, wherever God has placed us. What does it mean for you to "make disciples" in your current context? It might involve sharing your faith explicitly, or it could mean living in such a way that others are drawn to Christ through your example. Pray for opportunities to be a witness for Christ today, and for the courage to seize those moments when they come.