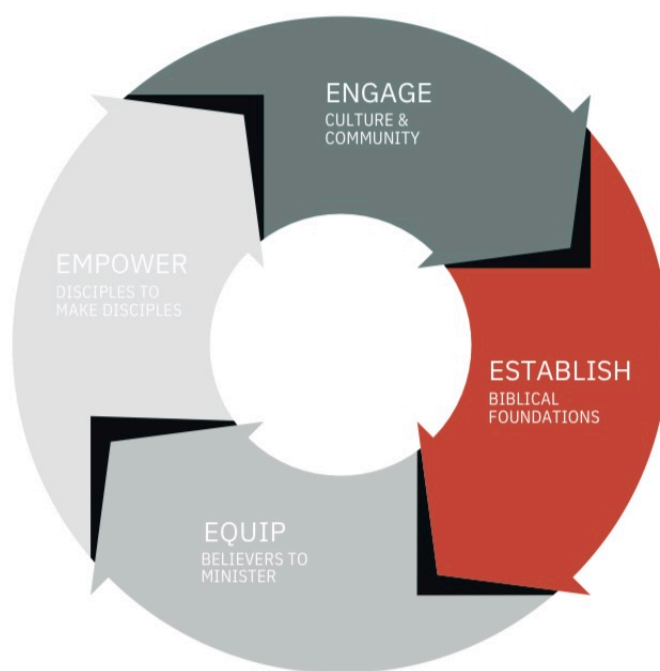


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and helping others do the same.



The purpose of our Koinonia Gatherings is to establish people in biblical foundations by building Christ-centered connections. We believe the Scriptures teaches that life change happens best in community, as we grow together in God's Word and are led by the Holy Spirit.

Below, you'll find a sermon-based guide from the most recent sermon to help lead a Rise Up Church Koinonia Gathering, along with a five day devotional designed to help you apply the sermon throughout the week.

Koinonia Gathering Guide: The Word That Sets You Free

Based on John 8:31-47

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open your hearts to His Word and help you honestly examine whose word you are abiding in.

Icebreaker Question

What's one thing you believed as a child that you later discovered wasn't true? How did learning the truth change you?

Sermon Summary

We explored Jesus' teaching on abiding in His word. The main focus: **If you abide in Jesus' word, you will be set free. But if you abide in any other word, you will be held in captivity.** The sermon covered three movements:

1. We must abide in Jesus' word
2. Be set free by Jesus' truth
3. The word you follow is the father you resemble

Key Scripture

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."- John 8:31-32

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Abiding in Jesus' Word

1. **What's the difference between "visiting" God's word and "abiding" in it?**
Share examples from your own life of times you've been a tourist versus a resident with Scripture.

2. **Jesus says we must abide in His word to be His disciples. What makes abiding difficult in our current culture?** What competes for your attention and time?
3. **The sermon mentioned that "abiding comes before knowing, knowing comes before freedom."** Why is this order important? What happens when we try to skip steps?
4. **What excuses do you make for not abiding in God's word?** (Examples given: "I'm spiritual but not religious," "I'm too busy," etc.) Be honest with your group.

Section 2: Set Free by Jesus' Truth

5. **Pastor Kevin said, "The biggest flex the enemy has ever convinced mankind: that sin leads to freedom while obedience to God leads to bondage."** Where do you see this lie playing out in culture? In your own thinking?
6. **The fishing analogy compared sin to bait that hides a hook.** What "bait" has been most tempting in your life? What was the hidden hook you discovered?
7. **Discuss the "STDs" mentioned: Soul-sucking, Time thieves, and Distractions.** How do these keep you from experiencing true freedom? What specific distractions are stealing your time?
8. **Jesus offers complete freedom, not partial or temporary freedom.** Why is it hard to believe we can be completely free from certain sins or patterns?

Section 3: Resembling Your Father

9. **"You resemble the people you spend the most time around."** Who or what are you spending the most time with, and how is it shaping you?
10. **The Jews claimed Abraham as their father, but Jesus said their actions revealed their true father.** How can someone claim to follow God but actually be following a different voice? What does this look like practically?
11. **Pastor Kevin described transformations: the angry becoming patient, the fearful becoming courageous, etc.** What transformation have you seen in yourself or others through abiding in Jesus' word?
12. **The sermon warned about making "no room" for Jesus in our hearts.** What are the subtle ways we start pushing Jesus out? (Examples: child-centered living, career focus, comfort-seeking)

Personal Reflection Questions

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for individuals to reflect:

- Whose word am I currently abiding in?
- What chains am I still carrying that Jesus has already broken?
- Am I resembling God or resembling something else?
- What is one specific area where I need to abide in God's word this week?

Key Takeaways

1. **Abiding is not perfection, but persistence.** You won't be perfect, but keep getting back up and following Jesus.
2. **There is only one truth.** We cannot create our own truth; we must submit to God's truth found in His Word.
3. **The word you listen to will form you.** You become like what you give your attention to.
4. **Jesus doesn't just break the hook; He adopts you.** Freedom in Christ means becoming a child of God, not just escaping sin.
5. **Abiding is love and protection, not restriction.** God's commands are designed to keep us from getting burned.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to implement this week:

Option 1: Daily Abiding

- Commit to reading one chapter of the Gospel of John each day
- Don't just read—pause and ask: "What is this teaching me about Jesus? About myself?"
- Journal one truth you learned and one way you'll apply it

Option 2: Time Audit

- Track your time for three days (including screen time)

- At the end of three days, compare time spent in God's Word vs. other "words" (social media, TV, news, etc.)
- Make one specific adjustment based on what you discover

Option 3: Truth vs. Lies

- Identify one lie you've been believing (about yourself, God, your circumstances)
- Find three Scripture verses that speak truth to that lie
- Memorize one of those verses and repeat it when the lie resurfaces

Option 4: Resemble Check

- Ask a trusted friend or family member: "What do you see me becoming? Who do I resemble?"
- Listen without defending
- Pray about what you hear and ask God to show you whose word you're following

Accountability Questions

1. What specific "bait" or distraction will you guard against this week?
2. When and where will you abide in God's word this week?
3. Who will you ask to check in with you about this commitment?

Prayer Focus

Pray together for:

- Honest hearts to see where we've been abiding in words other than God's
- Freedom from specific chains, lies, or sins that group members share
- Desire and discipline to abide in Jesus' word daily
- Transformation to increasingly resemble our Heavenly Father
- Those who have drifted from abiding in Jesus to return home

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that Your word sets us free. Help us to be residents, not tourists, in Your word. Break the chains we still carry. Free us from the lies we believe. Transform us to resemble You more each day. Give us grace to abide persistently, not perfectly. In Jesus' name, Amen.

For Next Week

- Read John 8:31-47 multiple times throughout the week
- Come prepared to share one way you abided in God's word and what freedom or truth you experienced
- Bring your questions about abiding, truth, or freedom

Additional Resources

- Consider starting a Bible reading plan together as a group
- Recommend accountability apps for Scripture reading
- Share testimonies of transformation through abiding in God's word

5-Day Devotional: Abiding in the Word That Sets You Free

Day 1: The Call to Abide

Reading: John 8:31-32; Psalm 119:105

Devotional: Jesus invites us not to visit His word occasionally, but to make our home there. Abiding means remaining, dwelling, living fully present with Christ. Consider the difference between a tourist and a resident. Tourists pass through, taking what they want, leaving when convenient. Residents stay through every season, tending what matters most. Many of us treat Scripture like a quick fix, opening it only when life unravels. But Jesus calls us to persistent, not perfect, abiding. His word becomes a lamp to our feet when we dwell in it daily. Today, ask yourself: Am I a tourist or a resident in God's word? What would it look like to truly abide?

Day 2: Freedom Through Truth

Reading: John 8:33-36; Romans 6:15-18

Devotional: The greatest deception is believing sin leads to freedom while obedience brings bondage. Like fish drawn to bait, we see only what appeals, never the hook beneath. Sin promises satisfaction but delivers slavery. Jesus exposes this lie with liberating truth: everyone who practices sin is enslaved to it. But here is the gospel beauty—only someone truly free can set captives free. Jesus, who never sinned, breaks every chain completely. This is not partial freedom or temporary relief; it is total liberation. The hook is broken. You must now believe it and walk in it. What bait have you accepted that keeps you from experiencing Christ's complete freedom? Confess it today and receive His truth.

Day 3: What Controls Your Time?

Reading: Ephesians 5:15-17; Matthew 6:33

Devotional: We live in an age of soul-sucking time thieves and distractions. We have more information than ever but less transformation. We know the latest news but neglect the ancient word. Busyness becomes our badge of honor while our souls starve. Jesus warns that the word you abide in forms who you become. If your time is consumed by scrolling, bingeing, and endless distraction, you are abiding in emptiness. Examine your last twenty-four hours honestly. Did you feel the angst of unfinished tasks or the peace of time with the Lord? Abiding requires intentionality. It means choosing

God's word over the world's noise. Today, identify one distraction stealing your time and replace it with Scripture.

Day 4: Resembling Your Father

Reading: John 8:37-47; 1 John 3:7-10

Devotional: Children resemble the parents they spend time with. They pick up mannerisms, speech patterns, values. Jesus tells religious leaders they resemble their true father—not Abraham, but the devil—because they reject truth and embrace lies. This is sobering. We become like what we worship, like who we follow. If you abide in fear, bitterness, or pride, you resemble the father of lies. But if you abide in Christ, transformation happens. The angry become patient. The fearful become courageous. The selfish become generous. This change is not self-improvement; it is the result of abiding in Jesus. Who do you resemble today? Your character reveals whose word you have been following. Choose today to spend time with your Heavenly Father.

Day 5: Coming Home to Abide

Reading: Luke 15:11-24; Hebrews 10:19-25

Devotional: Perhaps you once believed. You knew the songs, the verses, the language. But somewhere along the way, church hurt you, hypocrisy disappointed you, and you walked away from Jesus with it all. Today, Jesus extends the same invitation He gave those who drifted: abide in Me. He has not moved. He has not abandoned you. He stands ready to welcome you home. Some carry chains of guilt and shame, believing freedom is impossible. But who the Son sets free is free indeed. Jesus does not merely break your chains—He adopts you into His family as a beloved child of God. There is room in His heart for you. Stop moving Jesus out. Stop replacing Him with lesser things. Return to abiding. Come home today.