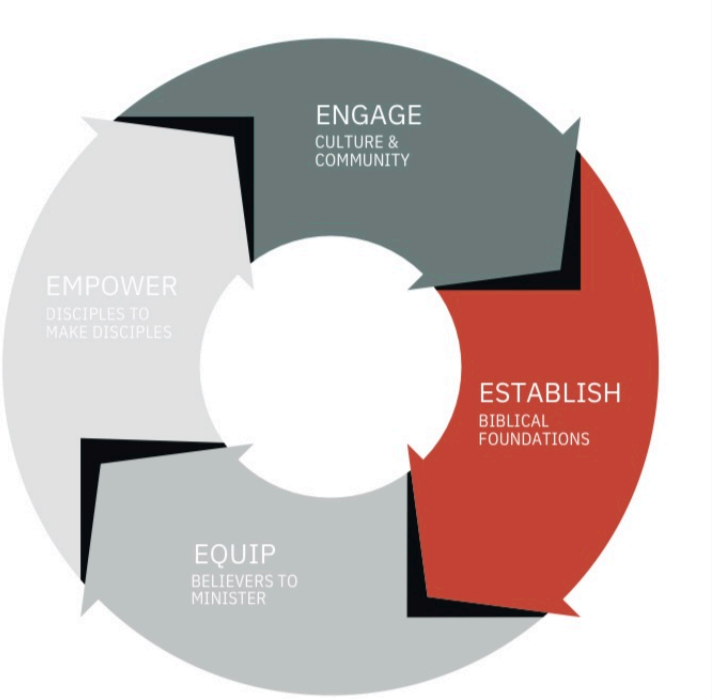
The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on John 15:18 - 16:4 | The Cost of Following Jesus Vs The Consequences of Hating Jesus

Day 1: Chosen Out of the World

Reading: John 15:18-19

Devotional: To be chosen by Jesus is to be set apart from a world system built on values, loyalties, and desires that run contrary to God. This is not a passive distinction. It is a declaration. When Jesus says He chose you out of the world, He is establishing ownership, authority, and identity over your life. The world's hatred is not a sign that you have failed. It is often a sign that you belong to someone the world has already rejected. Examine today where your deepest loyalties lie. Let your identity be rooted not in the world's acceptance, but in Christ's choosing.

Reflection Questions:

- In what areas of your life do you find yourself seeking the world's approval over Christ's?
- What does it mean practically to live as someone chosen and set apart?

Practical Application: Identify one area this week where you have allowed the desire to be accepted to silence your witness for Christ. Take one deliberate step to align that area with your identity in Him.

Day 2: The Servant and the Master

Reading: John 15:20-21; John 13:16

Devotional: Jesus reminds His disciples of a truth He had already established at the foot-washing in John 13 -- a servant is not greater than his master. If the world persecuted the one who raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, and walked in perfect love, it will not spare those who follow Him. Persecution is not a sign of God's absence. It is often a mark of genuine discipleship. The same world that rejected the light of Christ will resist the light reflected in you. Do not be surprised by the cost. Be prepared for it, and stand firm in the One who has already overcome.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you typically respond when your faith brings opposition or rejection?
- In what ways has the enemy used suffering, doubt, temptation, or distraction to pull you away from Christ?

Practical Application: Spend time in prayer this week specifically for believers around the world facing severe persecution. Let their faithfulness stir a deeper commitment in your own walk with Christ.

Day 3: No Excuse, No Other Way

Reading: John 15:22-25; Romans 1:20

Devotional: Jesus makes a sobering declaration -- those who have seen His works and heard His words have no excuse for their rejection of Him. Romans 1:20 reinforces this, noting that God's invisible qualities have been made plain through creation, leaving no one without witness. But Jesus goes further. He ties hatred of Himself directly to hatred of the Father, and He makes clear that no one comes to the Father except through Him. This is not an act of exclusion. It is an act of grace. There is a way provided. The question is not whether the door exists. The question is whether you will walk through it.

Reflection Questions:

- Have you fully surrendered to Jesus as the only way to the Father, or are there areas where you are trying to approach God on your own terms?
- How does the reality that Christ is the only way shape how you share your faith with others?

Practical Application: Write down the name of one person in your life who has not yet placed their faith in Christ. Commit to praying for them daily this week and look for one natural opportunity to share what Jesus means to you.

Day 4: The Helper Who Bears Witness

Reading: John 15:26-27; John 16:13; Acts 1:8

Devotional: Jesus does not send His disciples into a hostile world unarmed. He sends the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father and bears witness about Christ. You are not alone in your witness. The same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead dwells in those who belong to Him. Your role is not to convict the world -- that belongs to the Holy Spirit. Your role is to bear witness. This means your life, your words, your choices, and your love all serve as testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ. Live in step with the Spirit, and trust Him to do what only He can do.

Reflection Questions:

- Are you more like Jonah, reluctant to bring the good news to those you find difficult to love, or more like Jeremiah, feeling the fire of the gospel shut up in your bones?
- How are you actively depending on the Holy Spirit rather than your own strength in your witness?

Practical Application: Before engaging in a spiritual conversation this week, pause and ask the Holy Spirit to lead your words. Practice the discipline of speaking less and listening more, trusting Him to work through your obedience.

Day 5: Do Not Fall Away

Reading: John 16:1-4; Hebrews 12:1-3

Devotional: Jesus warns His disciples of what is coming not to discourage them, but to anchor them. When persecution arrives, He wants them to remember that He told them it would. Forewarned is forearmed. The Greek word translated as falling away carries the meaning of stumbling, taking offense, or abandoning one's allegiance to God. Hebrews 12 calls us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who endured the cross for the joy set before Him. The world is passing away. Its systems, its values, its hatred -- all of it is temporary. But the Word of Christ will never pass away. Hold fast to what is eternal.

Reflection Questions:

- Where in your life are you most at risk of stumbling or drifting from your allegiance to Christ?
- What does it look like for you personally to fix your eyes on Jesus in the middle of a world that is hostile to Him?

Practical Application: Set aside fifteen minutes today to sit quietly before God and honestly examine your heart. Ask Him to reveal any area where the world has reclaimed ground in your values, desires, or loyalties. Surrender that area to Him in prayer and ask for the grace to stand firm.

It is better to be hated by the world for loving Jesus than to be loved by this world for rejecting Him.

Koinonia Gathering Guide

"The Cost of Following Jesus vs. The Consequences of Hating Jesus"

Based on John 15:18 - 16:4

OVERVIEW

In this sermon, Pastor Kevin walks through Jesus's sobering warning to his disciples: loving him will bring the hatred of the world, but hating him allows the world's destruction to work from within. Using John 15:18 through 16:4 as the foundation, the message calls believers to examine their values, desires, and loyalties, and to ask honestly whether their lives bear witness to Jesus or quietly deny him.

Main Point: Loving Jesus may bring the world's hatred against you, but hating Jesus will allow the world's destruction within you.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The "world" Jesus refers to is any value, loyalty, or desire that is in rebellion against him. It is a system, not just a place.
- Jesus was hated not because he did wrong, but because he exposed the darkness in people's hearts. Our faithfulness to him will provoke the same response.

- Belonging to Jesus means the world's persecution cannot ultimately prosper against you. The relationship is the foundation of your security.
- Satan seeks to devour believers through suffering, temptation, doubt, and distraction. Recognizing which of these is most active in your life is essential.
- The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts the world. Our role is to bear witness, not to condemn.
- Falling away can take the form of stumbling into sin, taking offense at Jesus's truth, or quietly abandoning allegiance to God.
- It is better to be hated by the world for loving Jesus than to be loved by the world for rejecting him.

ICEBREAKER

Think of a time when doing the right thing cost you something, whether a relationship, an opportunity, or your comfort. Without going into too much detail, share what that experience felt like.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1: Why the World Hates Jesus

1. Pastor Kevin defined "the world" as any value, loyalty, or desire in rebellion against Jesus. Using that definition, where do you see the world most actively pushing against your faith right now?

2. Jesus said in John 3 and John 7 that the world hated him because he exposed evil. Pastor Kevin put it this way: "When Jesus come and expose you, he don't just go to the closet to get the skeletons. He go to the graveyard and dig them up." What does it feel like when Jesus brings something to the surface in your life that you would rather leave buried? How do you typically respond?

3. Pastor Kevin asked whether our values, desires, and loyalties are in direct opposition to Jesus. He used his own story of being more loyal to his cultural identity than to his identity in Christ. What is one area where your upbringing, culture, or family expectations has competed with your loyalty to Jesus?

4. Jesus says in John 15:19 that he chose his disciples out of the world. What does it mean to you practically that Jesus chose you? How does that truth change the way you face rejection or hatred from others?

Section 2: Bearing Witness in a World That Hates Jesus

5. Pastor Kevin described two ditches believers fall into when it comes to bearing witness. The Jonah ditch is refusing to share the gospel with people we dislike or want to see fail. The Jeremiah ditch is stopping because the cost has become too painful. Which ditch are you closer to right now, and what got you there?

6. Pastor Kevin said, "We compromise our witness because we don't understand the first part that Jesus said before all of this, to abide in his love." How does a weak connection to Jesus directly affect your willingness or ability to bear witness to others?

7. Think of a moment when you knew you were supposed to speak up or act on your faith and you did not. What held you back? What would it have looked like to trust God in that moment?

8. The Holy Spirit is described in John 15:26 as the Spirit of truth who bears witness about Jesus. How does relying on the Holy Spirit change the pressure you feel when it comes to sharing your faith?

Section 3: Do Not Fall Away

9. Pastor Kevin outlined four ways Satan tries to devour believers: through suffering, through temptation and desire, through doubt, and through distraction. Which of these is most active in your life right now? How has it affected your relationship with Jesus?

10. The Greek word translated "falling away" in John 16:1 carries three meanings: stumbling into sin, becoming offended at Jesus's truth, and abandoning allegiance to God. Which of these three feels most like a real danger for you in this season?

11. Pastor Kevin said, "Do not be tempted to get plucked away from abiding in my love for a world that will pass away." What is one thing the world is currently offering you that tempts you to loosen your grip on Jesus?

12. Jesus told his disciples about coming persecution ahead of time so that when it arrived, they would remember he had warned them and would not be caught off guard. How does knowing that difficulty is expected, not a sign that God has abandoned you, change how you face hard seasons?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This week, choose at least one of the following:

1. **Examine your allegiances.** Spend time in prayer asking God to show you any value, loyalty, or desire in your life that is in rebellion against him. Write down what he reveals and bring it before him honestly.

2. **Identify your ditch.** Determine whether you are currently in the Jonah ditch or the Jeremiah ditch. If you are in the Jonah ditch, ask God to show you who you are withholding grace from and take one step toward forgiving that person. If you are in the Jeremiah ditch, share with one trusted person in your group what has caused you to pull back from bearing witness.

3. **Name the devouring strategy.** Write down which of the four strategies, suffering, temptation, doubt, or distraction, Satan is most using against you. Find one passage of

Scripture that speaks directly to that area and commit it to memory this week.

4. **Bear witness in one specific way.** Identify one person in your life who does not know Jesus and take one intentional step toward them this week. This could be a conversation, an invitation, a meal, or simply a decision to pray for them every day.
5. **Reconnect with abiding.** Since Pastor Kevin linked compromised witness to a weak connection with Jesus, set aside one extended period of time this week, at least 30 minutes, to simply be with Jesus through prayer, Scripture, and silence without an agenda.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Before your group closes in prayer, take a moment for each person to answer this question honestly:

Based on the way I am currently living, would the world be able to identify me as someone who belongs to Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to reveal any area of your life where the world still has a hold on your values, loyalties, or desires.
- Thank God for the Holy Spirit, who helps you bear witness and does not leave you to face this world alone.

- Pray for the courage to remain faithful when faithfulness brings rejection.
- Pray for any specific person in your group who is facing persecution, doubt, or temptation right now.
- Ask God to keep you from falling away and to root you deeply in his love.