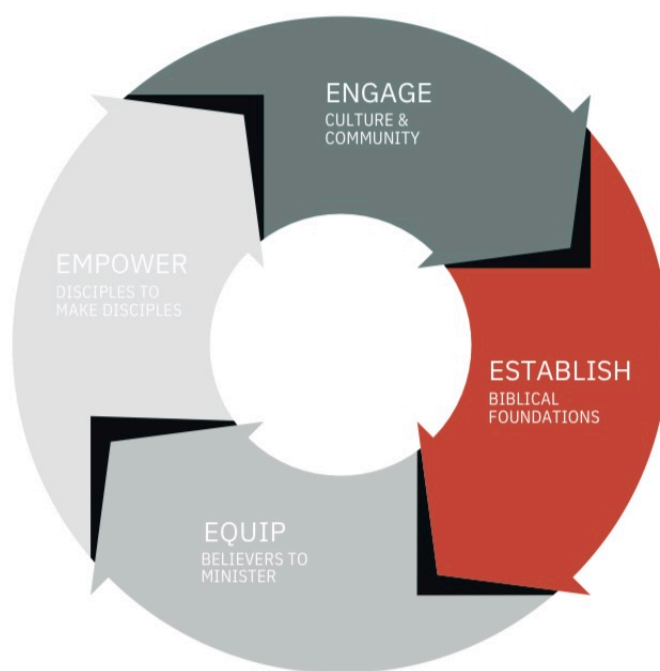


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Small Group Guide: Revealing Blind Spots to See Clearly

Based on John 9:1-12

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open your eyes to any blind spots in your life and to help you see His purpose and redemption clearly.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Share about a time when you had a "blind spot" while driving or in another area of life. What helped you become aware of it?

Key Scripture

John 9:1-3 - "As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.'"

Main Takeaways

1. The Disciples Were Blinded by Assumptions

- They saw suffering and immediately assumed sin/punishment
- Their first response wasn't compassion but judgment
- We often assume things about God without consulting Him

2. The Neighbors Were Blinded by Reputation

- They couldn't see past who the man used to be
- Their knowledge of his past blinded them to the miracle of his present
- We often struggle to believe our own redemption

3. Jesus Reveals Blind Spots to Give Clear Vision

- God's purpose is greater than our assumptions
- God's redemption is greater than our past reputation
- Walking by faith means trusting God's process, even when it looks messy

Discussion Questions

About Assumptions (20 minutes)

1. **The disciples asked "who sinned?" instead of "can you heal him?"** When you see someone struggling, what's your first response? How can we cultivate more compassion and less judgment?
2. **What assumptions have you made about God recently?** (Examples: He doesn't care, He's forgotten you, He's tired of forgiving you, He's punishing you for something)
3. **How do our assumptions about God limit what we believe He can do in our lives?**
4. **The blind man had to walk a quarter mile with mud on his face.** Share about a time when following God made your situation look worse before it got better. How did you respond?

About Reputation (20 minutes)

5. **The neighbors couldn't see past the man's reputation as a beggar.** Who in your life might be holding you to your past reputation? How does that affect you?
6. **"Sometimes the hardest person to convince about our redemption is ourselves."** Do you agree? Why is it hard to believe we've truly been changed?
7. **What "old reputation" do you struggle to let go of?** (past failures, addictions, broken relationships, poor decisions)
8. **The blind man didn't argue with the neighbors—he testified.** What's the difference between defending ourselves and testifying to what Jesus has done?

About Moving Forward (20 minutes)

9. **Three ways to move forward were mentioned:**
 - Replace past assumptions with present truth from God's Word
 - Stop rehearsing failures and start remembering God's faithfulness
 - Walk in obedience to God today
10. **Which of these three do you most need to practice right now?**
11. **What specific Scripture can you use to replace a lie or assumption you've believed about yourself?**
12. **The sermon said, "God's redemption is greater than our past reputation."** What would change in your life if you truly believed this?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Replace the Lie

- Identify one assumption or lie you believe about yourself
- Find a Scripture that speaks truth to that lie
- Write it down and read it daily this week

Option 2: Testimony Journal

- Write down 3-5 ways God has been faithful to you in the past
- When you're tempted to rehearse your failures, read this list instead
- Share one testimony with someone this week

Option 3: Compassion Practice

- When you encounter someone struggling this week, ask "How can I pray for you?" instead of making assumptions
- Pray for them immediately (in person or later privately)

Option 4: Obedience Step

- Identify one area where God is calling you to obey today
- Take one concrete step of obedience, even if it feels uncomfortable
- Journal about what happens

Personal Reflection Questions

(Allow 5-10 minutes of quiet reflection)

1. What blind spot has God revealed to me through this sermon?
2. Am I living based on assumptions or God's assurance?
3. Am I holding onto an old reputation that God wants to redeem?
4. What would it look like to "walk by faith and not by sight" in my current situation?

Prayer Time (15-20 minutes)

Group Prayer Focus:

- **Confession:** Ask God to reveal any assumptions we've made about Him or ourselves
- **Gratitude:** Thank God for His faithfulness and redemption in our lives
- **Petition:** Ask God to help us see His purpose in our current struggles
- **Breakthrough:** Pray for anyone stuck in an old reputation or struggling to believe they've been redeemed

Prayer Partners:

Break into groups of 2-3 and pray specifically for:

- Any blind spots God has revealed
- Freedom from past reputations
- Faith to trust God's process, even when it looks messy
- Eyes to see God's purpose instead of making assumptions

Closing Thought

"I was once blind, but now I see. Jesus has opened my eyes."

Your past reputation is not your present reality. God's redemption is writing a new story in your life today.

For Next Week

- Read John 9:13-41 (the investigation of the miracle)
- Reflect on how you've responded when God has done something new in your life
- Be prepared to share one testimony of God's faithfulness

5-Day Devotional: Seeing Clearly Through Christ

Day 1: Beyond Assumptions to God's Purpose

Reading: John 9:1-7

Devotional: The disciples looked at the blind man and immediately asked, "Who sinned?" They assumed his suffering was punishment. But Jesus revealed a different truth: "that the works of God might be displayed in him." How often do we assume God's absence in our struggles when He's actually preparing to display His glory? Your current hardship isn't necessarily punishment; it might be the canvas for God's masterpiece. The blind man couldn't see the sunrise, but he became the testimony everyone would remember. Stop filling in the blanks with your assumptions. Consult God before concluding your story is over. What you're walking through today might be the very thing God uses to reveal His power tomorrow.

Reflection: What assumption about your current situation needs to be replaced with faith in God's purpose?

Day 2: Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1-6

Devotional: The blind man had mud and spit covering his eyes and was told to walk a quarter mile to wash. His situation looked worse before it got better. He couldn't see where he was going, yet he obeyed. This is the essence of faith—trusting God's word when everything looks messier and dirtier than before. Sometimes God's process doesn't make sense to our natural eyes. The path to breakthrough often requires walking through what feels like humiliation or confusion. But the blind man didn't wipe off the mud to clean himself up; he let God's word clean him up. Stop trying to fix what only Jesus can heal. Your obedience in the messy middle is what leads to the miracle.

Reflection: Where is God asking you to obey even though the path looks unclear or uncomfortable?

Day 3: From Past Reputation to Present Redemption

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Isaiah 43:18-19

Devotional: The neighbors couldn't believe the transformed man before them. "Isn't this the beggar?" they argued. They were so fixated on his past reputation they couldn't comprehend his present redemption. Perhaps you face the same struggle—people who only see who you were, not who Christ has made you. Even harder, maybe you're the one holding yourself to an

old identity. But God's redemption is greater than your past reputation. You are no longer defined by your worst season, your addiction, your failure, or your brokenness. In Christ, you are a new creation. The old has passed away. Stop rehearsing your failures and start remembering God's faithfulness. Your testimony isn't about who you were; it's about who Jesus has made you to be.

Reflection: What old reputation (self-imposed or from others) do you need to release to embrace your redemption?

Day 4: Replacing Lies with Truth

Reading: Romans 12:2; Psalm 119:105

Devotional: Moving forward from a broken past requires intentional replacement. You cannot simply forget what happened; you must replace past-tense assumptions with the present-tense power of God's Word. Your past says you're damaged—God's Word says you're His workmanship, created for good works. Your past says you're unworthy—God's Word says you're chosen, loved, and redeemed. The enemy's favorite tactic is reminding you of who you were before Jesus so you'll never walk into who Jesus has called you to be. Combat this by becoming an expert in God's truth about you. Memorize it, speak it, believe it, and walk in it. Every lie has a corresponding truth in Scripture. Find it and stand on it.

Reflection: What specific Scripture truth do you need to speak over yourself daily to counter the lies you've believed?

Day 5: Testifying to Transformation

Reading: John 9:8-12, 24-34; 1 Peter 3:15

Devotional: The healed man didn't waste energy arguing with skeptics or defending himself. He simply testified: "I was blind, but now I see." Your transformation is your testimony. You don't need to convince everyone of your change; you need to point them to the One who changed you. Some will doubt, some will question, but your life speaks louder than their skepticism. The man didn't leave his neighborhood or change his location—he changed what he believed about himself and testified to God's goodness. You have a story of redemption that someone needs to hear. Don't let past shame silence your present testimony. What God has done in you is meant to point others to what He can do for them.

Reflection: Who needs to hear your testimony of how Jesus has opened your eyes and transformed your life?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, open my eyes to see clearly. Remove my blind spots—my false assumptions about You, my circumstances, and myself. Help me walk by faith when the path looks messy. Redeem me from my past reputation and establish me in my new identity in Christ. Replace every lie with Your truth, and give me boldness to testify to Your transforming power. In Jesus' name, Amen.