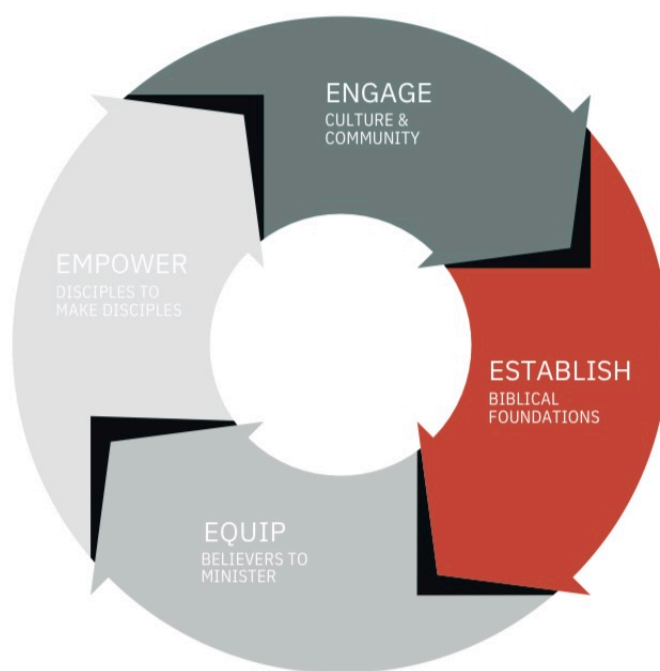


The mission of Rise Up Church is to raise disciples, empower families, and revitalize neighborhoods by the transformational power of the gospel. At Rise Up Church, our discipleship rhythm shapes how we live and expressed in four key movements that we call the 4E's. It is all about following Jesus and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

Scripture John 9:13-41

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open your eyes to areas where fear may be blinding you to His work, and for courage to surrender completely to Jesus.

Ice Breaker

Share about a childhood fear you had (like the pastor's fear of the dark). What were you afraid would happen? Looking back, how did that fear affect what you could or couldn't do?

Key Takeaways

1. **What we fear most is often what we see most, and what we see most can blind us spiritually to the works of Jesus.**
2. **Fear makes us protect our reputation more than our public obedience to Jesus.**
3. **People-pleasing is giving someone something you don't want to give so you don't have to deal with that person's actions or consequences.**
4. **Pride is often fear that learns how to defend itself.**
5. **The greatest miracle in John 9 isn't physical sight—it's a blind sinner recognizing and worshiping Jesus.**

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **The Parents' Response (vv. 18-23)**
 - Why do you think the parents responded the way they did when asked about their son's healing?

- What would being "put out of the synagogue" have meant for them practically? How does this compare to what we might risk today by following Jesus?

2. **The Pharisees' Blindness (vv. 24-34)**

- The Pharisees had all the evidence before them but still couldn't see. What was blocking their vision?
- How did the formerly blind man's understanding of Jesus progress throughout the chapter? (v. 11 → v. 17 → v. 33 → v. 38)

Personal Reflection

3. **Identifying Our Fears**

- The sermon asked: "What am I so afraid of losing that it keeps me from seeing what Jesus is doing?" How would you answer this question?
- "Whose opinion has more influence over your decisions than God's?" Who or what comes to mind?

4. **People-Pleasing vs. God-Pleasing**

- Share an example (without naming names) of when you compromised your convictions to keep someone else happy. What was the result?
- How can we shift from asking "What will people think?" to "Am I following God with what I am doing?"

5. **Surrender and Control**

- The pastor shared his own struggle with surrendering to the call to be a pastor. What area of your life is Jesus asking you to surrender that you're resisting?
- What do you fear will happen if you fully surrender that area to God?

Going Deeper

6. **The Spirit of Antichrist**

- The sermon stated that refusing to surrender when Jesus calls us is "operating under the spirit of the Antichrist." This is strong language. How do you respond to this statement?
- Is there something in your life that if Jesus said "lay this down to follow me," you'd say "I need one more second"?

7. **Jesus Seeks Us**

- After being cast out, Jesus went looking for the blind man (v. 35). How does it change your perspective to know that Jesus pursues you rather than waiting for you to get everything right?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Identify and Confess

- Write down what you're afraid to surrender to God
- Don't defend it—just confess it honestly in prayer
- Share it with one trusted person who can pray with you

Option 2: Replace Fear-Based Thinking

- Each time you catch yourself thinking "What will people think?" this week, stop and ask instead: "Am I following God with what I am doing?"
- Journal about the difference this shift makes

Option 3: Take One Step of Obedience

- Identify one specific area where you know God is asking you to obey but you've been holding back out of fear
- Take one concrete step this week toward obedience (even if it's small)
- Report back to the group next week

Option 4: Worship Through Surrender

- Like the blind man who worshiped Jesus (v. 38), spend intentional time this week worshiping God for who He is
- During that time, practice surrendering specific fears and control to Him

Group Prayer Focus

Pray for one another in these areas:

- Eyes to see where fear is blinding us to Jesus' work
- Courage to value God's approval over people's approval
- Freedom from people-pleasing patterns
- Grace to surrender areas of control and pride
- Spiritual sight that matures as we follow Jesus
- For those who haven't fully surrendered to Jesus—that today would be their day

Scripture Memory

John 9:25 - "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

Before Next Week

- Read John 10:1-21 (the continuation of this story)
- Reflect on your spiritual sight: How has your understanding of who Jesus is grown over time?
- Be prepared to share one way you practiced surrendering to God this week

Closing Thought

"The biggest miracle today could be you surrendering your life completely to Jesus. Remember: whoever comes to Jesus, He will never cast out."

5-Day Devotional: Seeing Clearly Through Surrender

Day 1: When Fear Blinds Us to Miracles

Reading: John 9:18-23

Devotional: The parents of the healed man witnessed an undeniable miracle—their son born blind could now see. Yet fear of rejection paralyzed them into silence. They chose the approval of their community over celebrating God's work. How often do we do the same? We witness God moving in our lives but remain silent, afraid of what others might think. Fear of losing acceptance, status, or comfort can blind us to the very miracles happening before us. Today, ask yourself: What approval am I seeking that keeps me from boldly proclaiming what Jesus has done? God's approval is the only one that truly matters. When we fix our eyes on Him rather than on people, we begin to see clearly. Surrender your need for human validation and embrace the freedom of living for an audience of One.

Day 2: The Pride That Refuses to Surrender

Reading: Romans 1:21-25; John 9:24-34

Devotional: The Pharisees had all the evidence they needed—a man born blind now saw. Yet they exchanged the truth about Jesus for a lie because surrendering to Him meant surrendering their authority, their position, their carefully constructed lives. Pride is often fear wearing armor, insecurity defending itself. When Jesus asks us to surrender, He's asking us to lay down everything we've built, everything we've worked for, everything we think defines us. This terrifies us. But here's the truth: what you're clinging to is nothing compared to what Jesus offers. The Pharisees chose their religious status over the Messiah Himself. What are you choosing over complete surrender to Christ? Confess it today. Don't defend it, don't rationalize it—just lay it down. Jesus is worth more than anything you're holding onto.

Day 3: The God Who Pursues

Reading: Luke 15:1-7; John 9:35-38

Devotional: After the blind man was cast out by the religious leaders, Jesus came looking for him. This is the heart of our God—He pursues. Left to ourselves, we would never seek God; Romans 3:11 tells us no one seeks Him. But God seeks us. He pursued Adam in the garden, Jonah in rebellion, Moses in the wilderness, and Saul on the Damascus road. Today, He pursues you. The very thing the man's parents feared—

being cast out—happened to their son. Yet in that moment of rejection, Jesus showed up. Sometimes God allows us to be stripped of everything we thought we needed so we can discover that He is everything we truly need. You may feel abandoned, overlooked, or cast aside, but Jesus is seeking you right now. Will you respond? The greatest miracle isn't just receiving sight—it's recognizing Jesus as Lord and surrendering completely to Him.

Day 4: Progressive Revelation and Spiritual Maturity

Reading: 2 Peter 3:17-18; Philippians 1:6

Devotional: Notice the blind man's spiritual journey: first Jesus was "the man called Jesus," then "a prophet," then "from God," and finally "Lord, I believe." Physical sight came instantly, but spiritual sight matured progressively. Many believers expect complete understanding the moment they surrender to Christ. But spiritual growth is a journey. God reveals Himself gradually as we walk with Him, deepening our understanding and faith over time. Don't be discouraged if you don't have everything figured out today. Surrender isn't about having perfect theology or complete clarity—it's about trusting the One who is perfecting you. What matters is that you're moving forward, that today you see Jesus more clearly than yesterday. Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ? Are you allowing Him to mature your faith? God is faithful to complete the work He started in you. Keep following, keep surrendering, and watch how He reveals Himself more fully each day.

Day 5: What Are You Afraid to Surrender?

Reading: Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 10:28-31

Devotional: Jesus asks the hardest question: What will you surrender to follow Me? For the Pharisees, it was their authority and reputation. For the parents, it was community acceptance. For you, it might be a relationship, a dream, control, an addiction, or the life you thought you deserved. Here's the reality: whatever you're unwilling to surrender to Jesus, you've made your god. Holding onto it while claiming to follow Christ is operating under the spirit of antichrist—harsh words, but true ones. Jesus doesn't want part of your life; He wants all of it. Not because He's demanding, but because He knows that only complete surrender leads to complete freedom and abundant life. Identify today what you're afraid to let go. Confess it without defending it. Then release it into His hands. You will never regret what you surrender to Jesus. What you gain in Him is infinitely greater than anything you give up. Take the step. Surrender completely. And discover that Jesus was worth it all along.