

essentials^o

You have been created to become like Jesus. Our hope is that this session will help you understand the importance of developing good spiritual disciplines in our pursuit of spiritual maturity.

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV)

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The focus of this session relates to five key spiritual disciplines (habits):

- Lifestyle of Worship
- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Giving and Stewardship
- Fellowship with other believers

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The goals of this session:

- To help you better understand spiritual maturity (spiritual growth).
- To help you evaluate your spiritual health in five key areas: Worship, Study, Prayer, Stewardship and Fellowship.
- That you would commit to actively practicing the good habits necessary to pursue spiritual maturity.
- That you would connect with others in a Church 212^o life group.

Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity is the process of becoming more like Jesus.

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him—and all along he knew who would—should become like his Son, so that his Son would be the First, with many brothers.

Romans 8:29 (TLB)



Facts about spiritual maturity:

1. It's not automatic.

¹² You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others, but instead you have dropped back to the place where you need someone to teach you all over again the very first principles in God's Word. You are like babies who can drink only milk, not old enough for solid food. ¹³ And when a person is still living on milk it shows he isn't very far along in the Christian life, and doesn't know much about the difference between right and wrong. He is still a baby Christian!

Hebrews 5:12-13 (TLB)

2. It is a process.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

2 Peter 3:18a (ESV)

3. It takes discipline and effort.

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.

1 Timothy 4:7 (NASB)

The five essential areas of spiritual health covered in this session are: Worship, Study, Prayer, Stewardship and Fellowship.

Habit #1: Worship

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

John 4:23 (ESV)

God desires worshipers. It is the primary purpose of the church. We are called to worship God in private and to assemble with other believers in worship together. We are to live our daily lives as a living sacrifice in worship to God, who has shown amazing mercies to us.

Lifestyle of Worship

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 12:1 (ESV)

Our daily activities should reveal that Jesus Christ is the priority in our life. The way we conduct ourselves in our work, family and relationships will determine if people see God's work in our life:

- **Work**

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.

Colossians 3:23 (ESV)

- **Family**

⁶*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.* ⁷*You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.* ⁸*You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* ⁹*You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (ESV)

Worship, cont.

- **Relationships**

¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.* ¹⁷ *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.* ¹⁸ *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

Romans 12:16-18 (ESV)

Spirit-Filled Life

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

**Who is the Holy Spirit?**

Ruwach – a wind, breath, a violent exhalation, blast of breath.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2 (ESV)

Pneuma – a current of air, blast of breath, a strong breeze.

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

John 6:63 (ESV)

1. The Holy Spirit is a person.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.

John 14:16 (ESV)

Worship, cont.2. The Third Person of the Trinity.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 14:26 (ESV)

**What is the Holy Spirit's role in my life?**

⁴ *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Acts 1:4-8 (ESV)

1. The Holy Spirit comforts me.

"If you love me, obey me; and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter, and he will never leave you.

John 14:15-16 (ESV)

2. The Holy Spirit convicts me.

⁵ *But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.*

John 16:5-8 (ESV)

Worship, cont.3. The Holy Spirit empowers me to live with Christ like character.

¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (ESV)

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

4. The Holy Spirit empowers me to live with Christ like power.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

5. The Holy Spirit equips me with Spiritual Gifts.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (ESV)

Worship, cont.6. The Holy Spirit equips me with Spiritual Direction.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

John 16:13 (ESV)

**How do I live a Spirit-filled life?**1. Remove barriers between us and God through faith:

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

The Holy Spirit can only dwell in the heart of a believer.

2. Fellowship with Him:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14 (ESV)

We must spend time to develop any relationship. Our relationships with Jesus and the Holy Spirit are no different - It takes time to develop intimate fellowship: specifically time in prayer and in God's Word.

3. Walk with Him:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 (ESV)

Remembering Him throughout our day and being in continuous dialogue with Him. Listen for the whispering voice of the Holy Spirit.

Habit #2: Bible Study

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)



How do I get more from my Bible?

1. I must accept the authority of the Bible.

We believe that the Bible (and only the Bible) is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining doctrinal truths. In its original writing, the Bible is inspired, infallible and inerrant.

a. Receive God's Word with an open heart and mind.

¹³ And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. ¹⁴ And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. ¹⁵ As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

Luke 8:13-18 (ESV)

b. Respond to God's Word with obedience.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:22 (ESV)

2. I must absorb the truths of the Bible.

a. Hearing God's Word.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.

Romans 10:17 (ESV)

Challenge: We forget 95% of what we hear after 72 hours.

Bible Study, cont.

Solution: Improve our hearing:

- Be ready and eager to hear God's Word. (Luke 8:8, Psalm 119:103)
- Deal with distractions and attitudes that prevent hearing. (Luke 8:18)
- Take notes on what we hear. (Hebrews 2:1)
- Act on what we hear. (James 1:22, 1:25)

b. Reading God's Word.

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Revelation 1:3 (ESV)

- Read daily

It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes

Deuteronomy 17:19 (NASB)

c. Studying God's Word.

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Acts 17:11 (ESV)

The main difference between reading and studying the Bible is that we take notes and ask questions when we study:

Ask these questions when we study a passage:

- **Who** is involved? Who is speaking? Who is the original audience?
- **What** is the topic or main emphasis?
- **Where** is the action taking place?
- **When** was the passage written? When is it taking place?
- **Why** was it written? Why are we reading this 2,000 years later?
- **How** did it apply to the original audience? How does it apply to me?

Bible Study, cont.**d. Memorizing God's Word.**

² *Obey me and live! Guard my words as your most precious possession.* ³ *Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart.*

Proverbs 7:2-3 (TLB)

²¹ *“Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you.*

²² *Receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart.*

Job 22:21-22 (ESV)

Benefits of memorizing scripture:

- It helps me resist temptation (Psalm 119:11)
- It helps me make wise decisions (Psalm 119:105)
- It strengthens me in times of stress and struggle (Psalm 119:49)
- It comforts me in times of need (Jeremiah 15:16)
- It helps me be a witness to unbelievers (1 Peter 3:15)

Three keys to successfully memorizing scripture: 1. Repeat 2. Repeat 3. Repeat. We succeed at what we emphasize.

e. Meditating on God's Word.

Meditation is simply focused thinking about a verse or passage so that I can apply the truth to my own life.

¹ *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;* ² *but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

Psalms 1:1-2 (ESV)

Ways to meditate on a verse:

- Picture it. Visualize the scene in our mind.
- Pronounce it. Read the verse aloud. Emphasize different words each time.
- Paraphrase it. Explain the verse in your own words.
- Personalize it. Replace names in the passage with our own name.
- Pray it. Turn the verse into a prayer.
- Probe it. Ask questions.

Bible Study, cont.

3. I must apply the principles of the Bible.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

John 13:17 (ESV)

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

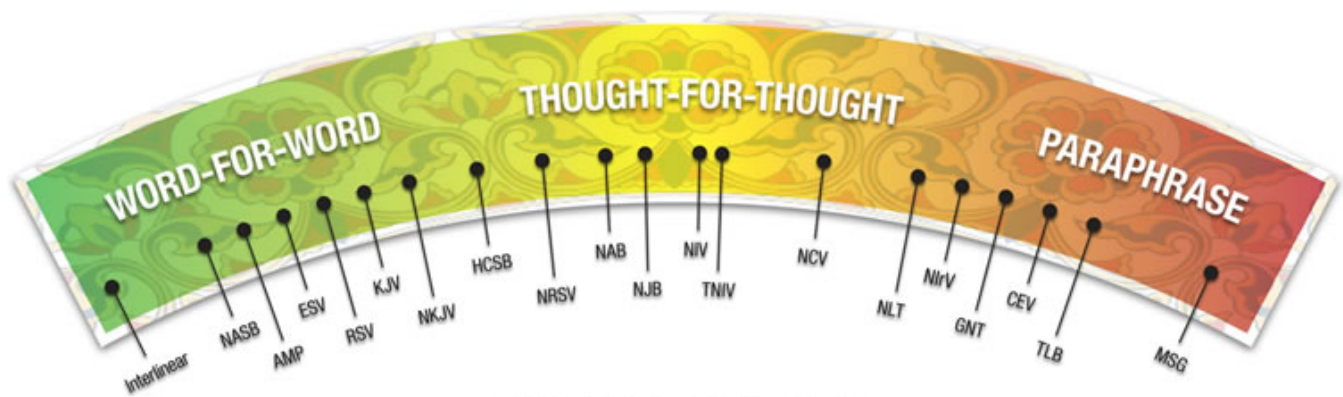
James 1:22 (ESV)

Build the Bridge

- How did the passage apply to the original audience?
- What is the timeless truth/principles of the passage?
- How does the passage apply to me? What is my response?

4. For serious study of scripture, utilize at least two different translations from different positions on the translation continuum:

Types of Bible Translations



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>NASB - New American Standard Bible AMP - Amplified Bible ESV - English Standard Version RSV - Revised Standard Version KJV - King James Version NKJV - New King James Version</p> | <p>HCSB - Holman Christian Standard Bible NRSV - New Revised Standard Version NAB - New American Bible NJB - New Jerusalem Bible NIV - New International Version TNIV - Today's New International Version NCV - New Century Version NLT - New Living Translation</p> | <p>NirV - New International Reader's Version GNT - Good News Translation (also Good News Bible) CEV - Contemporary English Version TLB - The Living Bible MSG - The Message</p> |
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We can have great confidence in the English language translations of scripture.

Habit #3: Prayer

Jesus modeled and exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer that gave Him great strength. Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed the habit of prayer. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to spend time with God daily in prayer.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Romans 12:12 (ESV)

1. In my daily prayer time, I am:

- Giving devotion to God.

And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

2 Chronicles 31:21 (ESV)

- Getting direction from God.

⁴ *Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.*

⁵ *Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.*

Psalms 24:4-5 (ESV)

- Growing in my relationship with God.

²⁵ *O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

John 17:25-26 (ESV)

Prayer, cont.

2. Use the model that Jesus gave us:

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray...

Luke 11:11 (ESV)

⁹ *Pray then like this:*

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread,*

¹² *and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

*[for yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.]*

Matthew 6:9-13 (ESV)

- Connect with God relationally. *“Our Father in Heaven”*
- Run to His name. *“hallowed be your name”*
- Pray His agenda first *“Your kingdom come, your will be done”*
- Depend on Him for everything *“Give us this day our daily bread”*
- Keep your heart right *“forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors”*
- Take a stand against the enemy *“lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil”*
- Have faith in God’s ability *“for yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever”*

Habit #4: Stewardship

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 (NLT)

The Gospel is the ultimate demonstration of God's generous nature towards mankind. The Bible consistently teaches that God blesses us so that we may bless others.

Biblical stewardship is honoring God with our time, treasure and talents.

1. Giving our Time

¹⁵ *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NASB)

How do we use our time? Are we so busy living our lives that we don't consider how to best use the time to serve God and others?

Do we rest? We cannot be busy all the time (even serving in ministry). God set aside one day each week as a day of rest. He actually commanded it.

2. Giving our Treasure (money, finances)

⁹ *Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce;*

¹⁰ *then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.*

Psalms 3:9-10 (ESV)

- Giving draws us closer to God:

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21 (ESV)

- Giving is an antidote to materialism:

¹⁷ *As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (ESV)

Money is a primary competitor with Christ for the lordship of our life

Habit #4: Stewardship , cont.

- Giving in an investment in eternity:
But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.
Matthew 6:20 (NASB)

God's part in our finances

God owns Everything.

*The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains,
The world, and those who dwell in it.*
Psalm 24:1 (NASB)

The Bible contains more than 2,350 verses dealing with money and possessions

Our part in our finances

Remembering our Identity.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
Ephesians 5:1 (ESV)

We should get our identity from who we are and whose we are – not from what we own. Our self worth is NOT our net worth.

3. Giving our Talents

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)

The discovery^o session helps us better understand our spiritual gifts and how we are all uniquely shaped to serve God and others

¹⁸ *Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,* ¹⁹ *storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*
1 Timothy 6:18-19 (NASB)

Habit #5: Fellowship

God never intended for us to go through this life alone. Throughout the Bible we see the importance of being in community. In fact, authentic life-change happens in the context of relationships.

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

At Church 212^o, we believe that our church needs to grow LARGER and SMALLER at the same time.



How do we grow larger and yet maintain close relationships?

Every member of Church 212^o needs to be part of a life group.

⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47 (ESV)

How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house.

Acts 20:20 (ESV)

Life Groups provide three things:

- A place to Connect. “Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him”. (1 Corinthians 8:22 LB)
- A place to Protect. “give up our life for our Christian brothers and sisters” (1 John 3:16 NLT)
- A place to Grow. “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17)

Habit #5: Fellowship, cont.

Church 212° life groups are for everyone. They are where we pray for one another, care for one another, share our challenges with one another and grow.

The best way we can care for you is through life groups. These are three things you need to know:

1. Our life groups are “free market” to meet the individual needs of the groups.

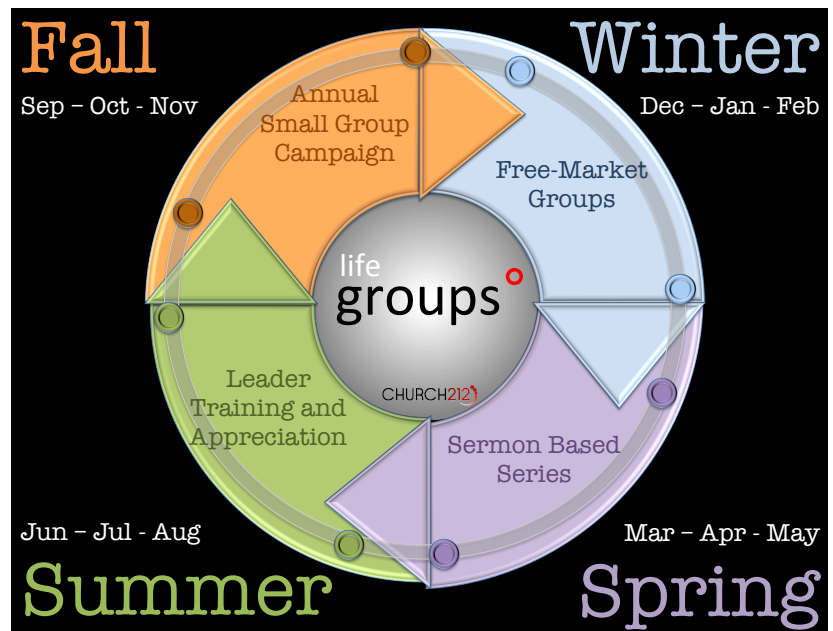
2. Our life groups have four seasons: fall, winter, spring and summer. Each season has new opportunities to register for groups and starting new groups.

3. **You** can H.O.S.T. a life group:

- **H**eart for people
- **O**pen your home or office
- **S**erve a simple snack
- **T**urn on the technology!

4. Types of Life Groups:

There are many different types of Life Groups. Some groups focus primarily on Bible studies, while others focus on fellowship or serving in the community. There are as many different types of groups as leaders with imaginations.



³⁴ *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.* ³⁵ *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*”

John 13:34-35 (ESV)

Go online to check out our life groups –or– stop by the welcome table during weekend services. We also offer special Life Group Leader Training at various times throughout the year.