

Celebrating Gospel-centered Relationships, Part 1
Date: 6/5/16

Read Together

Read the Scripture and overview below before your Life Group meets.

Scripture passage: Acts 20:17-24

Gospel-centered relationships are treasured gifts. Providing us with much needed support and encouragement through our life experiences, the friendships built along our journey bolster us, spur us on, and even pick us up when we fall down. God gives us Gospel-centered relationships and builds in us a community that gives testimony to the grace of God and the reality of the love of Christ in our lives day by day. Gospel-centered community teaches us humility, honesty, unconditional love, faithfulness, perseverance and patience. These life-long lessons give us what we need in times of security and peace, as well as, in times of uncertainty and adversity, teaching us to look to Jesus and His life-changing power as we *go there* with the Gospel for Him.

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your lesson to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- What is a Gospel-centered relationship?
- What makes a Gospel-centered relationship different from a non-gospel-centered relationship?
- Give an example of a Gospel-centered relationship in your own life. What makes this friendship distinct?

Read Acts 20:17-20 (Skim Acts 19).

- Recap Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus. List the good and challenging things that occurred.
- Paul needed to get to Jerusalem but wanted to say his goodbyes to friends in Ephesus. When speaking to them, he shared a warm-hearted message, remembering his time spent there and the relationships he built. The first phrase in his speech states, "How I lived among you ..." What does this say about Paul's desire to "go there" with the people he was charged with?
- In verse 19 Paul says that he "served the Lord." Paul's calling was to minister to the people, but who was his first priority?



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- Read Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 4:2, Philippians 1:1 3:7-11. How does Paul describe himself? Who was he serving? Was he self-focused or God-focused? Are you self-focused, God-focused or other-focused?
- In Acts 20:19 Paul says he was “serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trails.” Paul considered himself a debtor to the Gospel, not as one who was entitled. How can you apply this perspective to your life and relationships?
- How does Paul’s mindset show his surrender to Christ and his belief that God was in control of the circumstances of his life? What trials had he and others with him faced, that would have helped him mature in this way?

Read Acts 20:20-21.

- What does, “Paul did not shrink back,” tell you about Paul’s teaching?
- Read Ephesians 4:1-16. What does “speaking the truth in love,” mean?
- Describe a time when you withheld the Gospel because of fear of what others would think?
- Paul’s main teaching was “repentance and faith.” What is repentance? Discuss the three aspects of repentance Pastor McKinley spoke about in his message.
- Who convicts a person of sin and brings them to repentance? (See John 16:7-11)
- What is faith?

Read Acts 20:22-24.

- Paul’s goal was to be faithful in his calling. He did not merely strive to survive, or preserve himself. Rather, he chose to “finish the course,” no matter what the outcome. Read 2 Timothy 4:7. Are you in survival mode or are you trying to be a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- What are you modeling to those in your sphere of influence?
- Is the grace of God apparent in your relationships? Why or why not?

Do Life Together

These questions are meant to encourage you to apply spiritual truth and live on mission for Jesus. It is your Life Group leader’s responsibility to challenge you and hold you accountable to taking steps of growth and faith. Take these questions to heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you to grow in your role as a disciple and ultimately, a disciple-maker.

Who will you speak the truth in love to, this week?
Who will you model faithfulness to, this week?



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