

Session 2

The Importance of Intentionality

Welcome and Prayer

Ask for a volunteer to open the session with prayer.

Sharing

Invite the group to share any insights, questions or revelation from the daily reflections from the prior week.

Introduction of Session Focus

Intentionality - "Done with intention or by design" (Merriam-Webster). We are looking at the importance of intentionality so we can be on the same page and move together with intention. As disciples, it is important to look at our intention and purpose.

Jesus spent a lot of time correcting the purpose of the apostles' training so they could see his intention. We want to ask two questions for you to ponder:

1. What kind of walk are your faith practices and habits designing? (subtext, what kind of walk do you want to have?)

2. What is the intention or purpose of a discipleship guide?

Time in the Word

Scripture Reading - Deuteronomy 30:14

"But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it."

The Scriptures are, in part, a story of direction and redirection. The Old Testament is about calling and shaping, and re-calling and reshaping, God's chosen people. The New Testament is more of the same; it is about God coming to earth and calling and shaping his people - the church - us. We have the honor of continuing that work as his Church and specifically as discipleship guides, walking with friends, family, and even strangers as God continues to call and shape his chosen people. The life of discipleship is a calling and choice that takes intentionality.

Read the two scripture passages below. How does each passage encourage you to be intentional about being rooted in and following Christ?

Scripture reading - Deuteronomy 30:19-20

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you

may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

Scripture reading - Colossians 2:6-7

“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.”

Watch the Video: “The Importance of Intentionality” with Rachel Sosebee.
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/9248204/video/673620411/embed>

Large Group Discussion

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video?
2. What are your intentions for this experience? (What are you hoping to gain or learn or do?)
3. What idea or topic do you feel challenged by?
4. Do you have any general questions about the course purpose, process, and tools?

Breakout sessions

Gather in groups of two or three to read and discuss the following Scriptures:

Scripture reading - Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you

today shall be on your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Discussion Questions

1. What is happening in the life of the Israelites as this command is given?
2. What is the difference between listening and hearing (for you)? How do you “hear” with intentionality?
3. What does intentionality in hearing God look like for you? What do you hope it will look like? What is one small step you can take to move towards that vision?
4. What does intentionality for discipleship in your community look like for you?
5. Do you have any questions, comments, insights or inspirations to share from your personal time with the Word last week? How did God get your attention this week?

Large group wrap-up

Have participants share any closing thoughts, questions, insights or observations that arose from the break out groups. Remind participants to do the daily devotions and encourage them to journal their insights and questions.

Next week: “What is a Discipleship Guide?”

Close in Prayer

How can we pray together?

(Pray for this new community, new practices and habits and to hear God.)

Helpful Resources

Crafting a Rule of Life by Stephen A. Macchia

Foundations of Christian Spirituality by Dr. Christopher Hall (video series)

How to Craft a Rule of Life Based on the Six Streams by Christ Webb

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Living Forward: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Get the Life You Want by Michael Hyatt and Daniel Harkavy

Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life by Tish Harrison Warren

Ragged: Spiritual Disciplines for the Spiritually Exhausted by Gretchen Ronnevik

Spiritual Care by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Strengthening the Soul of your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry by Ruth Haley Barton

Daily Reflections for Between the Sessions

To disciple someone is to be willing to invest in the lives of others by providing them with spiritual guidance, prayerful support, and vocational accountability. Discipling is simply being willing to walk with someone as they learn to walk with Jesus. It is helping someone to see and hear God already moving in their life. Before we can make disciples we must nurture our own discipleship through prayer and meditation on God's word.

Devotions: Week Two

Weekday 1

Scripture reading - Colossians 3:12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Focus Questions

1. Read through the scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. You can only speak with what you are filled with. To invite the word of Christ to dwell in you richly takes intentionality. What time and practices do you have to create space for the Word of Christ to dwell in you?

4. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

(Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection)

What has caused you to think deeper?

Weekday 2

Scripture reading - Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

Again, I saw vanity under the sun: one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Scripture reading - Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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.

Focus Questions

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. Both these passages talk about the importance of community. What is the center of that community? What is the purpose or potential impact of that community?
4. Who do you gather with now? Where/who is your community to find encouragement and consider the stirring of the Holy Spirit together? Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What have you thought about today in this focus area that you are longing for?

Weekday 3

Scripture reading - Acts 9:10-19

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.

Focus Questions

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. Saul would not have become Paul without Jesus, but he also might not have had the grounding and encouragement without the ministry of Ananias. Who has ministered to you in a time of blindness and listening to God?
4. Who in your life is experiencing blindness or is in a season of discovering God and listening for his voice? How might you be used like Ananias to minister and guide them? Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What small specific step and active response can you take in the direction God's Word is leading you?

Weekday 4

Scripture reading - 1 Samuel 3:1-9

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Focus Questions

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. Who is/has been an Eli figure in your life? Who has helped you be aware of God speaking and invited you into a willingness to listen?
4. Who is/has been a Samuel in your life? Who is someone God is speaking to but needs help hearing, practicing listening and having a willing spirit to pause and ask the Lord to speak?

5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

How does this passage focus my attention first on Jesus, second on my identity “in Christ,” and third on my participation in the Body of Christ?

How is this passage moving me beyond myself to take a specific small step in the direction of serving my family, church, or neighbor?

Weekday 5

Scripture reading - 1 Samuel 3:10-18

And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” Then the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”

Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him.”

Scripture reading - Proverbs 27:17

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

Focus Questions

1. Read through the Scriptures a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. Eli knew Samuel had a word from the Lord for him. He also could sense that it was news Samuel did not want to deliver. How did Eli respond?

4. How do you react when you are questioned or hear news you don't want to hear?

5. How are you when you have to deliver news or ask a question you don't want to ask?

6. How did God show up in Samuel and Eli's challenging conversation? How has God acted in a challenging conversation you've had to have?

7. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

Reflecting on the Scriptures this week, what theme do you see developing?

Review any action steps you have felt led to take. If you have not yet started, when will you begin?

Begin to write a one or two sentence statement for this week's focus area. Try to have it reflect what the verses this week have taught you about who Christ Jesus is, and his invitation to follow him in this area of life.

Saturday (before worship...preparing)

Saturdays are a day of preparation as we contemplate the coming Sabbath. Look back over the week, consider such questions as:

1. What sins will I lay before the Lord in my confession?

2. What prayers will I lift up?

3. What questions will I be seeking the answers to?

4. What burdens do I need to lay down in order to be fully open to the movement of the Holy Spirit?

5. Who might I invite to journey with me?

Sunday (after worship...pondering)

Sundays are devoted to worship and reflection. We gather together as the Body of Christ to lift our praises to God and receive what only he can give us. Later, reflect on such questions as:

1. What point of the sermon or Sunday School lesson most caught my attention? What exactly touched my heart?

2. Which song, hymn or portion of liturgy most became a prayer or conversation with God?

3. How will making my confession and hearing the absolution affect how I live this week?

4. What strength or comfort did I receive as I participated in worship today?

5. What was the gospel message I heard today and who did I share it with?

6. Who did I speak with that I can remember in prayer this week?