

Nextlevel Groups

Session Two
Version 3.2

CONNECTING

Part Two

This session is designed to help you gain a clear perspective on the role and purpose of this group. How accurately you “see” this group will determine its impact on your life. The following categories are intended to sharpen your focus and guide your steps:

Goal: Spiritual Formation

The purpose of this group is not just the transfer of information but *transformation*. We desire to be *formed* into the likeness of Christ.

Romans 12:2 reveals that life-transformation is the result of a renewed mind (as well as choosing non-conformity to culturally-shaped thinking patterns). However, as Jesus and James cautioned, biblical knowledge alone (merely “hearing the Word”) does not change lives; it is the consistent application of that knowledge (actually “doing the Word”) that produces profound heart-level change. (See Matthew 7:24-27 with James 1:22-25.)

Our goal in this group is to regularly expose ourselves to the truth of Scripture so as to alter the way we think, and then to act upon this new understanding of the life God intends for us.

It is crucial to our personal and group success that we know what we are aiming at, to keep in view our end product. In reality our final destination is not a place but a Person. We are each on a journey to become more like Jesus Christ. As the perfect Man, we could aspire to no higher goal. This is clearly God’s design and intention for us. (See Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10)

Means

God has graciously provided several means (aptly called “means of grace”) whereby we can participate with Him in the adventure of becoming like Jesus. The following areas (though not a comprehensive list) will guide our methodology in the months ahead.

1. **The Scriptures:** The Bible reveals God’s character (what He is like), God’s ways (how He operates), and God’s will (what He desires). The Bible will be the map that guides us to our ultimate destination of Christ-likeness. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
2. **The Holy Spirit:** Jesus also gave us the gift of His presence in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He will guide us into the truth of the Scriptures and thereby help us become like He who is the Truth. (See John 14:6;26; 16:12-15) We will invite His presence weekly.
3. **The Apprenticeship of Jesus:** It’s simple yet profound: by emulating Jesus we become like Him. (See Luke 6:40; 1 John 2:6; Ephesians 5:1)
4. **The Spiritual Disciplines:** We will help each other do the simple things Jesus regularly did that kept His relationship to the Father intimate and miracle-producing. We will encourage each other, for example, to read and reflect on the Scriptures, to spend time daily with the Father in prayer, and to intentionally retreat from people and busyness for the sake of our emotional, physical, relational and spiritual health and productivity.
5. **The Brotherhood:** The successful journey into Christ-likeness cannot be travelled alone. This is precisely why we are together: to help each other every step of the way. You are God’s gift to your brother; he is God’s means of grace to you. (See Hebrews 10:23-25) This is a *completely different way* of living out one’s faith: TOGETHER.



Approach

In order for each of us to fully experience all God has in store for our journey together, and because there is so much at stake, it is absolutely essential that we approach this enterprise with the following mindset:

- no-nonsense (we will, like committed athletes, run this race in order to win, 1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- highly intentional and vigorous (we will strain ahead and press on toward the goal, Phil. 3:12-14)
- prioritized commitment (we will seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness, Mt. 6:33)
- full engagement (we will make living for Christ the primary purpose of life, Phil. 1:21)

Effect/Benefits

The following results can be expected in the life of each fully-engaged man:

- **Personal growth:** you can expect observable character development, as witnessed by you yourself and by others—like your spouse, your children, or your close friends
- **Reputation:** over time you will inevitably gain respect and honour from others in your relational and vocational spheres, leading to increased credibility and esteem
- **Leadership:** consistent personal development will lead to a marked increase in your sense of calling, your ability (skill), and your desire to *influence* others and so move them on to God's agenda for their lives
- **Impact:** as you make progress on your personal journey toward spiritual, emotional and relational health, and with God's help you can:
 - become a radical, revolutionary change agent for God
 - rescue men from small, self-centred, low-impact lives
 - free men from bondage to sexual and material and professional distractions, obsessions and addictions
 - heal marriages and homes (from a personal position of marital health and stability) by helping renew other husbands and fathers
 - “save” the Church from its mediocre impact on culture by reversing (through example) men's typically passive, spectator mentality in the local church
- **Personal fulfillment:** all these changes will lead to a growing satisfaction from living out the genuine—*abundant*—Christian life and accomplishing things of lasting value
- **Christlikeness:** the ultimate goal and benefit is that your life will bring GLORY TO GOD

Sharing

What is your personal “next level”? (Respond to one or all of the following questions.)

- To the best of your knowledge, what direction do you need to go next in your spiritual journey?
- What do you need to do (accomplish), or become (character) with the help of the Holy Spirit and the men here with you?
- What did God say to you in response to your prayers this past week asking Him to reveal what *He* thinks is your next level?

Prayer

Together, ask *only* for God to make this spiritual goal a reality in each man's life.

Assignment for next week: Memorize **1 John 2:6**.