

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS INTENTIONAL: What Jesus can do through purposeful disciples

INTRO: This week's teaching introduced us to the INTENTIONALITY of GOD toward us. "We love Him because He first loved us" [1 John 4:19]. God's initiating love toward us resulted in our responsive love toward Him. We are changed because He initiated a love relationship with us, in Christ. Our Connect Group study focuses on WHY WE ARE A CHURCH – to connect people in life-defining, life-shaping relationships in Christ.

QUESTIONS: How has God's intentional love toward you changed your life?

How important to you is helping another person experience God's intentional love?

Begin with Your EXPERIENCE

Share with your group a relationship with someone that has changed, or "defined," your life. Who was [or is] that person? Who initiated the relationship? What have you experienced together, and how have you changed since you've been in this relationship?

Look in the WORD

One of the most clear verses about the reality of change in our lives is **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Take a moment as a group to read and talk about this verse.

- What is the reason or cause which brings about personal change?
- Can you explain how a person comes to be "in Christ"? How does this happen?
- How is the "in Christ" change described?
- Is it instantaneous, or is there a process involved?
- How would you put the process into your own words?

Clearly, when we are in Christ [according to **2 Corinthians 5:17**], "some things gotta go, and something else needs to start happening." A second passage describing HOW changes which happen in our lives is **Ephesians 4:13-18**

- How do people who are [growth-wise] "children" grow up, according to this passage?
- How would you describe the importance of relationships to this growth process?
- What are the key actions fellow Christians are to take with each other in order to change and grow?
- Do you see this going on in your experience? Talk about this in your group.

Circling back to the relationship which was instrumental in changing your life, were some of the dynamics of **Ephesians 4:13-18** going on? Any "speaking the truth in love"? Any sharpening by other Christians in your life?

My LIFE - our MISSION

As we've been saying, God changes us when we begin a new relationship with Him. He does some of the best life-change through others in our lives. Isolated Christians struggle to grow and mature; connected Christians have a much better chance of becoming more like Christ, and helping others to experience the same wonderful transformation.

Finish the study by daring a self-assessment:

✓ **GOD IS MAKING MY DAY...** [] consistently [] sporadically [] rarely

[if "sporadically" or "rarely," you may not be giving God enough relational impact in your life]

✓ **I AM SHARING MY TOUGH STUFF** in relationship... [] consistently [] sporadically [] rarely

[if "sporadically" or "rarely," you may not be giving an important friend enough access to your life]

Remember – you're part of a church team intent on connecting people to life-defining relationships in Christ. If you are disconnected from the Lord, or from spiritually sharpening friends...prayerfully make some changes.