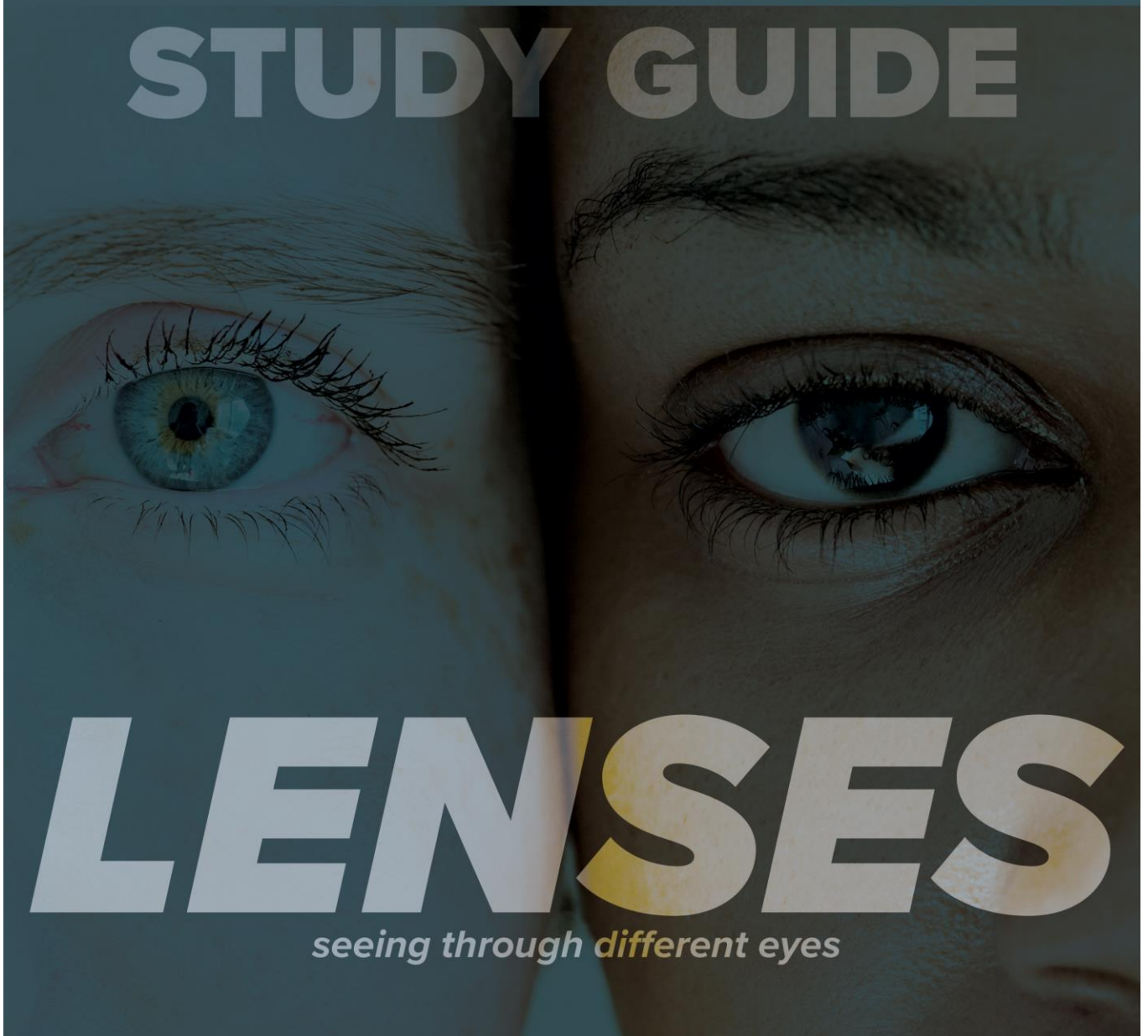


SMALL GROUP

STUDY GUIDE



LENSES

seeing through different eyes



I struggle to see the world from any other perspective than my own. Everything I experience comes through my two eyes. I do try to hear and see other perspectives through asking questions in conversations, through reading books by different authors, and by having experiences outside my normal routine.

I do not think we have to fully understand someone else's experience in order to show them love and grace, yet it does often help. What is it really like to be hungry? Not just because you forgot to eat lunch, but because your rent was due. What is it like to be in a crowd and yet feel like no one sees you? Or what is it like for people to take one look at you and judge you, deciding you are not worth even a second glance?

Through this study, I hope you will have conversations in your small group to hear other perspectives. Notice the different experiences that people have had. Remember in one sense we are each different and unique, and at the same time we are each created from the image of God.

My desire for this series is that we will all open our eyes a little wider to see the beautiful people God has placed all around us. We can grow in looking through a new lens to the heart of the people in front of us. May God bless you as you see him in a new light.

Pastor James

Week 1

We will begin by thinking about how Jesus sees his calling in this world. Who was Jesus trying to reach? And what does that mean for us today?

EXPERIENCE God's Love.

Prayer Focus: How can God open your eyes to see the people around you in a new way? Each time you see an eye shape you can write a few words that come to your heart or mind while praying or reading this week.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP Relationships.

Day 1: Read Luke 4:14-30

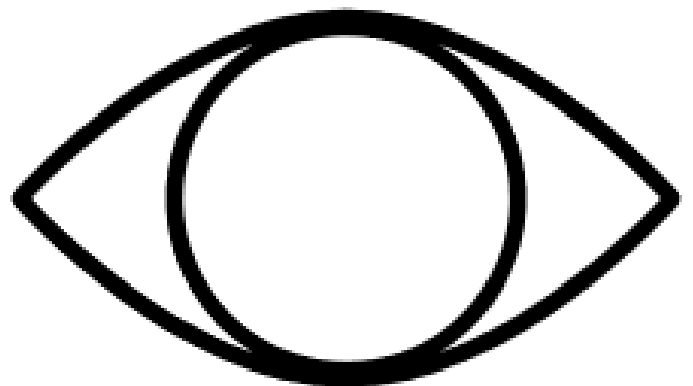
1. Where is your hometown? What do you like the best about your hometown?

2. What is Jesus' five fold mission according to verses 18-19?

3. How did the crowd respond when Jesus mentioned two foreigners who were served by Elijah and Elisha?

4. Thinking about question 2, and who Jesus came to minister to, where might God be calling you to share the gospel?

5. How do you think Christianity today fulfills Jesus' mission?



Day 2: Read 2 Kings 5:1-14

This is the story of Naaman that Jesus referenced in yesterday's reading.

1. What piece of advice given to you have you appreciated most?

2. Why would Naaman trust a captive girl to lead him to healing?

3. Why is Naaman reluctant to follow Elisha's instructions?

4. When have you been unwilling to accept God's Word because it did not meet your expectations?

5. Would you be able to offer healing to someone who may seem like an enemy?

Day 3: Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

1. What type of training is/was needed for your profession?

2. What things did Paul say he did to reach people with the gospel?

3. Why do you think Paul tried to become like someone else?

4. Give examples of how that might look in your life?

5. What life experiences have you had that might help you connect with others?

Day 4: Read Luke 10:25-37

1. Have you ever helped a stranger in distress? OR Have you ever been helped by a stranger?

2. What may be some reasons that the priest and Levite didn't stop to help the hurt man?

3. How does the parable answer the question "Who is my neighbor?"

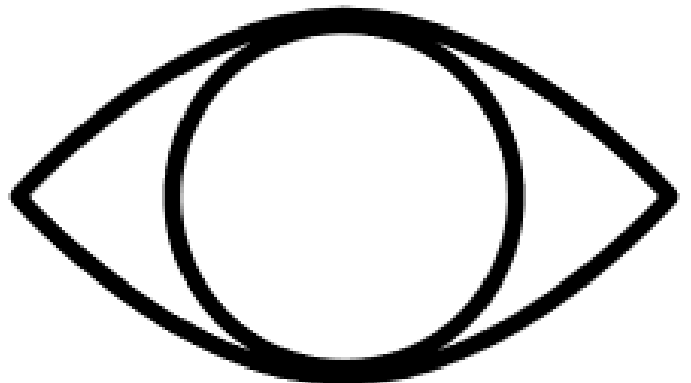
4. What point do you think Jesus was making with this parable?

5. How does this parable speak into your life?

Day 5: Read Psalm 43

1. What does the psalmist want God to do for him?

2. What questions do you ask God when you are in despair?



3. What problems of today would cause someone to write a lament like this?

4. What personal experience of yours where you put your hope in the Lord could you share with someone who is discouraged?

REVIVE The World.

In this week's scripture Jesus shared his mission. What is your mission in life? Are there specific people in need that God has placed on your heart to serve? How are you serving these people or where can you serve these people? Discuss with your small group or a friend.

Week 2

What do you think it is like to be really hungry? How would hunger effect everything else you needed to do in life? God is concerned with those who are hungry. How can we grow in seeing this better?

EXPERIENCE G o d ' s L o v e .

Prayer Focus: Pray for those who do not get enough food each day.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP R e l a t i o n s h i p s .

Day 1: Read Luke 6:1-5

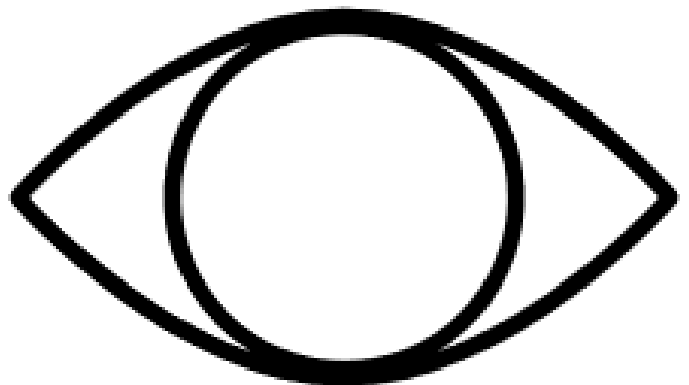
1. What food would you refuse to eat no matter how hungry you were?

2. What were the disciples accused of doing?

3. What does “religion” say is right in this scripture and what does Jesus say is right?

4. How might “religion” hinder the sharing of gospel and showing compassion today?

5. How can we avoid this?



Day 2: Read 1 John 3:16-24

1. What is your love language—receiving gifts, quality time, acts of service, words of affirmation or physical touch? (These are from Gary Chapman's Five Love Languages. If you do not know which one you are, you can usually guess by thinking about the way you feel the most loved and appreciated.)

2. How do we know what love is from this scripture?

3. What example does John use to show an act that is not loving?

4. What are your favorite ways to show love to others? (This may connect to your love language.)

Day 3: Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Note: Right before this passage God instructs the Israelites to cancel debts every 7 years. This was to keep people from going too far into poverty.

1. Where do you tend to be “tightfisted” with money or other resources?

2. Who is God most concerned with in this passage? The rich or the poor?

3. What promises are given for a generous heart?

4. What are some of the excuses people make for not giving to the poor?

5. What has helped you grow in generosity?

Day 4: Read Psalm 42

1. What hymn or praise song lifts your spirits in difficult times?

2. What do you think is meant in verse 3?

3. The psalmist was missing going to worship in verse 4. What do you feel is significant about worshipping God with others?

4. Have you ever thirsted for God like the writer of this psalm?

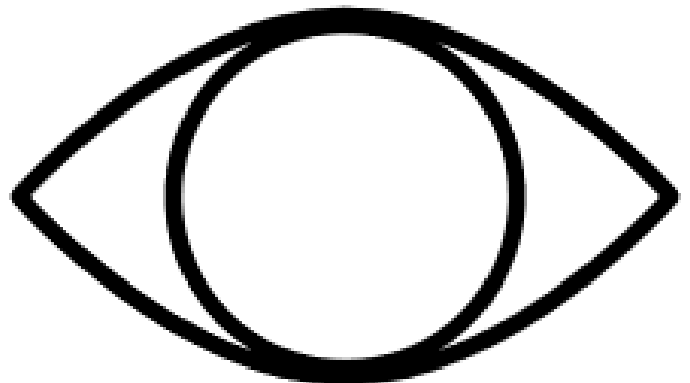
5. What can we do to strengthen our desire for God?

Day 5: Read Matthew 14:13-21

1. What is the biggest crowd you have ever had to feed?

2. Both Jesus and the disciples wanted the hungry crowd to have food. How did their solutions differ?

3. How much was leftover from 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish?



4. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach the disciples through the miracle of the feeding of the 5000?

5. How can we apply that lesson to our lives?

REVIVE
The World.

Find a way to support those who are hungry. There are several ministries that do this in the Quad Cities. You also could choose to donate to our food pantry at Christ Church. We serve families with students at Adams and Truman Elementary Schools.

Week 3

When you have limited resources what are the essentials? If your income was cut in half, what would you be willing to live without? Where might you go for help?

EXPERIENCE God's Love.

Prayer Focus: Pray for those who daily struggle to make ends meet. Pray for their mental strength to persevere.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP Relationships.

Day 1 Read: Matthew 6:25-34

1. How would you rate yourself on the worry scale (1-no worries; 10-worries continually)?

2. What examples does Jesus point to to convince us worrying is a waste of time?

3. What does he tell us to seek first? How can we do that? What blessing comes with it?

4. How does the last thing Jesus says in this passage give some context?

5. What is God saying to you through this passage about handling your particular worry or disappointment?

Day 2 Read Luke 10:38-42

1. Think of someone you know that has the gift of hospitality. What makes them such a good host?

2. What was Martha's complaint about Mary?

3. What do you think was the reason for her complaint?

4. Jesus said Mary had chosen the better thing. What do you think he meant by that?

5. How do you seek to serve others while also keeping God-given priorities?

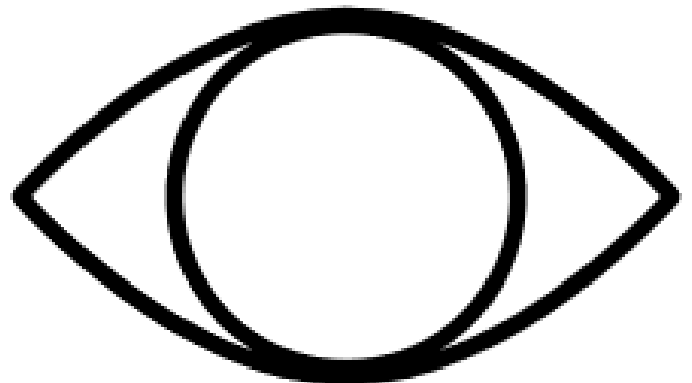
Day 3 Read 1 Kings 17:7-16

1. Describe a time in your life when you had to “scrimp” on food.

2. What did Elijah tell the widow to do and how did she respond?

3. How do you think the widow felt about Elijah’s words in verses 13-14?

4. Why would God send him to get food from a widow who had no food?



5. When have you been blessed by someone you were trying to serve?

Day 4 Read Philippians 4:4-13

1. What is the best thing that happened to you this week?

2. How are we to present our requests to God?

3. What is Paul's secret to contentment (verses 10-13)?

4. From verse 8, what are some things you can think about that fit these requirements?

5. Where do you need help finding contentment? How will you ask God to strengthen you?

Day 5 Read Psalm 27

1. If you could ask one thing of the Lord and have it answered, what would it be? Why don't you ask?

2. What three qualities of God does David recall in verse 1?

3. What do you think David is saying in verse 10?

4. How has the Lord been a "light" or a "stronghold" in your life this past month?

5. What are you waiting on the Lord for now? Or what is something for which you have had to wait a long time?

REVIVE The World.

Revive Sunday is next week. If you have not already, sign up to work on one of the Revive Projects. You might see what others in your small group are doing or choose the one closest to your heart. Get signed up today!

Week 4

It is Revive Sunday week. A great time to remember that we can work together to make a major impact on our community. God calls us to serve together as we care for one another.

EXPERIENCE G o d ' s L o v e .

Prayer Focus: Pray for your Revive Sunday project. Pray for the team that will work together and for those who will be impacted by the work.

What spoke to you in your revive work?

DEVELOP R e l a t i o n s h i p s .

Day 1 Read: Matthew 5:1-12

1. What is your favorite paradox about life? (examples: The more you give, the more you receive. If you love someone, let them go.)

2. What does the word blessed mean?

3. In verses 3-10 what attitudes are listed that Christians should have and what are their corresponding blessings?

4. Write down words that are opposite of qualities found in verses 3-9 (for example: meek-overbearing). Share some of your words with your group. Did these words help you better understand attitudes found in these verses?

5. Which beatitude do you find the most challenging? How will you work on that this week?

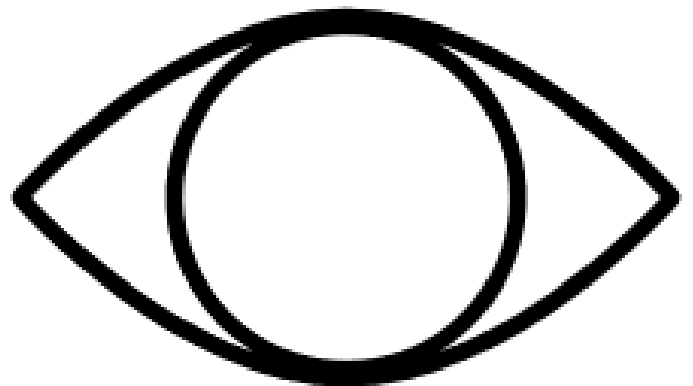
Day 2 Read Acts 2:1-12

1. What foreign language would you like to learn and why?

2. Describe in your own words how the Holy Spirit came to the disciples.

3. What did the Holy Spirit enable the disciples to do?

4. What do you think it means that everyone heard the wonders of God in their own tongue?



5. The disciples spoke boldly about Christ when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Where might the Holy Spirit be leading you to speak boldly about Jesus?

Day 3 Read Matthew 9:9-12

1. What is the worst job you had as a teenager?

2. How do you think Matthew's profession would have impacted him as a Christ follower?

3. What was the complaint the Pharisees had against Jesus? What does this tell us about them?

4. What is Jesus saying in verses 12-13?

5. How does this challenge our attitudes towards those considered outcasts today?

Day 4 Read Isaiah 58:6-11

1. What thoughts go through your mind when you see someone begging at an intersection?

2. Looking at verse 6, what is it that God wants his people to do?

3. How can we do those things in today's world?
4. What is the result of serving for justice? (Verses 8-11)
5. Which of the promises in verses 8-11 mean the most to you and why?

Day 5 Read Psalm 37:1-9

1. What is something that someone else has that you wish you had?
2. What is being discouraged in this psalm?

3. What does this psalm say we should do instead?

4. What helps you to not fret or get angry?

5. What situation in your life do you need to trust and commit to the Lord and wait on him? How will you use the verses from this psalm to encourage you in the process?

REVIVE
The World.

Consider if there is an ongoing way you can support the ministry you served during Revive Sunday. Is there a monthly or regular way you can continue the work you started? Maybe invite others to join you.

Week 5

Teaching is one way we can bring change. When we take the time to talk, ask questions and learn from one another, we can grow in understanding each other.

EXPERIENCE God's Love.

Prayer Focus: Pray for teachers and school staff as they pour into the lives of others.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP Relationships.

Day 1 Read John 13:12-17

1. Who was your favorite grade schoolteacher and why?

2. What example did Jesus give us to follow in these verses?

3. What lesson was Jesus teaching by washing his disciples' feet?

4. What example comes to your mind that would be the equivalent today to a rabbi washing his disciples' feet?

5. Specifically, how will you put Jesus' teaching into practice in at least one relationship this week at home, church or work?

Day 2 Read Deuteronomy 6:4-12

1. As a child, what is one lesson you were taught by an adult that you are most grateful for today?

2. How were the Israelites commanded to love the LORD?

3. How were parents to teach the Word of God to their children?

4. How is your love of God evident in your life and in your home? How could you make it more evident?

5. What everyday situations do you use or could you use to teach others about the love of God?

Day 3 Read Luke 3:7-16

1. You are producing a play with someone from your family or small group in the role of a fiery street preacher. Who would you cast in the role and why?

2. What excuse does John say will not work the crowd in verse 8?

3. What specific things does John the Baptist tell the people to do to produce the fruit of repentance? (Verses 10-14)

4. What impresses you about John's words and his interactions with the crowd?

5. Given your occupation or situation, what specific way might John encourage you to produce fruit?

Day 4 Read Titus 2:1-8

1. What is something that is important to you now that would have surprised your younger self?

2. What four groups was Titus told to teach? Why do you think these groups were given different instructions?

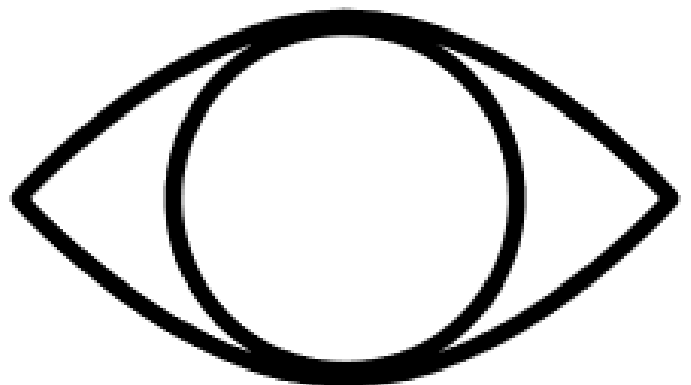
3. What were the desired results from this that we find in verse 5 and 8?

4. How do the instructions for the group from question 2 you fit in speak into your life?

5. If you were instructing these groups today, what is one thing you would encourage each to do?

Day 5 Read Psalm 119:33-40

1. What subject do you always enjoy learning more about? OR What subject would you like to know more about?



2. What different synonyms are given for God's Word in this passage?

3. Do you think if you understood all of God's law you would obey it? (Verse 34) Why or why not?

4. How does your life tend to turn to God's statutes or selfish gain? Why? (Verse 36)

5. How would your life change if you prayed this psalm daily?

REVIVE
The World.

Find a way to support our school partnerships with Adams or Truman Elementary Schools. Or support a school near you. Your support could be through prayer, being a mentor, being a volunteer, or some other way. Pastor Helen might be a great contact for making a connection.

Week 6

In a world that is growing more connected through technology there is an increase in the feeling of isolation and loneliness. Studies are showing that loneliness, depression and anxiety are all on the rise. How can we help each other know that we are not alone?

EXPERIENCE G o d ' s L o v e .

Prayer Focus: Pray for those who struggle with loneliness, anxiety and/or depression.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP R e l a t i o n s h i p s .

Day 1 Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-20, 25-27

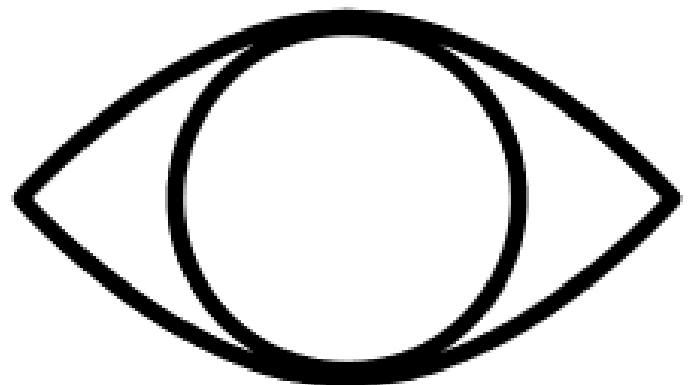
1. Which of your 5 senses do you think it would be easiest to do without?

2. What point(s) is Paul making with his comparison of the body of Christ to a human body?

3. How does this comparison help you as you consider your role in the church?

4. Are there people you feel do not belong in the body of Christ?

5. What does verse 26 say to you?



Day 2 Read 1 Kings 19:1-18

1. What was your favorite “hideout” as a kid?
2. What was Elijah running from?
3. How do we see God’s tender care for Elijah in verses 1-9?
4. Where was God not in verses 11-13?
5. What lessons/encouragements are there for you in these verses?

Day 3 Read Matthew 11:28-30

1. When is your soul the most rested?

2. What promise are we given in this passage?

3. How does Jesus describe himself?

4. In verse 29, why use a symbol of work and slavery to picture rest?

5. How can we as Christians live in a way that reflects Jesus' yoke is easy and his burden is light to the world around us?

Day 4 Read Lamentations 3:19-26

1. Where do you go to get a reprieve from the hectic pace of a day?
2. Do you think lamenting before the Lord shows faith or ingratitude?
3. What did this writer remember about God that gave him hope?
4. What do you remember about God that gives you hope?

5. Write a prayer of lament regarding your concerns—concerns about the world, our nation, your family, your church or personal life. Share with your group how laying out your concerns before God affected you.

Day 5 Read Psalm 139

1. Who knew you best when you were growing up?

2. According to this psalm, how well does God know us? How does that make you feel?

3. Put verses 23 and 24 into your own words? Why is this good to pray for ourselves?

4. How does the psalm make you feel about yourself and your value to God?

5. What verse in this Psalm speaks to you most today?

REVIVE
T h e W o r l d .

Reach out to someone you might think is lonely. This might be a neighbor, co-worker or friend. Make arrangements to chat over coffee or go for a walk in a park. If you feel alone, let someone in your small group know and schedule a time to chat.

Week 7

Many people struggle in life today because of an addiction. Usually we think about drug and alcohol addictions, but there are many forms of addiction. How does God call us to care for those facing addictions?

EXPERIENCE God's Love.

Prayer Focus: Pray for those struggling with addiction. Pray also for the family and friends who try to support and encourage their loved ones.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP Relationships.

Day 1 Read Galatians 6:1-5

1. Would anyone want to carry your suitcase--are you known as a heavy or light packer?

2. How does Paul say we should restore a Christian brother caught in sin? What might that look like?

3. What comes to mind when you read the phrase “carry each other’s burdens?”

4. What does Paul warn us against in verses 3-5 and how can we guard against it?

5. In what ways do you think it is okay to take pride in yourself?

Day 2 Read Matthew 4:1-11

1. What food is the hardest for you to resist?

2. What three different temptations did Satan use with Jesus?

3. What can we learn about Satan from this scripture that could help us avoid being deceived?

4. What temptations today can have life-altering consequences?

5. What have you found to be helpful in overcoming temptation?

Day 3 Read Hebrews 4:14-16

1. What gives you confidence as you approach something new?

2. Do you tend to see Jesus as powerful God or human and humble? Why?

3. What two things do we learn about our high priest in these verses?

4. Knowing this, how does it affect how you view: 1) your trials, 2) your sin?

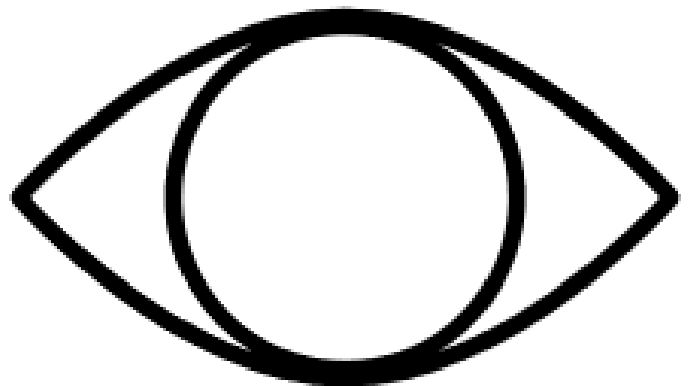
5. How would you define the words mercy and grace? What is the difference? When do we receive these gifts according to verse 16?

Day 4 Read James 5:13-20

1. Do you pray more when you are feeling thankful or when you are feeling stressed?

2. When does James say we should pray?

3. How did verse 17 describe Elijah? What point was James making?



4. How can we show love and support to someone who has wandered from the truth without giving approval to their actions?

5. What do these verses teach about prayer, confession, and the importance of Christian community? How can we apply this to our lives?

Day 5 Read Psalm 23

1. What person has been a good shepherd to you in your spiritual life?

2. How does the word shepherd give us a good picture of our LORD? How are sheep good examples of human behavior?

3. Name 3 benefits of having the LORD as your shepherd from this psalm. How does this encourage you?

4. What has God taught you in the valley that you may not have been able to learn on the mountaintop?

5. Where is God leading you? How could your small group/church family support you?

REVIVE
The World.

OneEighty is a local ministry serving those facing addiction. They also have many projects focused on prevention. Check out their website at oneeighty.org and see what they are doing and how you can help.

Week 8

Hopefully this series has been showing you that sometimes our preconceived ideas do not match reality. We make judgments without considering what is really going on in a person's heart or life. Discrimination happens when we allow our thoughts and ideas to keep us away from other people. Jesus lived in a way that often broke through barriers between people to meet them where they were.

EXPERIENCE God's Love.

Prayer Focus: Pray for eyes to see where you might have barriers built between you and other people. Pray for our world to truly see one another.

What spoke to you in the message?

DEVELOP Relationships.

Day 1 Read John 4:4-14

1. What have you found to be a good conversation starter?

2. What barriers in Jesus' time should have kept him from this conversation with the woman at the well?

3. What does Jesus offer to the woman at the well?

4. What does Jesus mean by "living water"?

5. Have you accepted Jesus' gift of Living Water? If not, will you pray about it. If you have accepted it, who do you need to tell about it? Pray for the opportunity to meet them at the well.

Day 2 Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22

1. When have you felt like an outsider?

2. What does Moses say God wants from his people in verses 12-13 and for what reason? Do all these things apply to us today?

3. How does Moses describe God in verses 17-18? What impresses you from these verses?

4. How does verse 19 help us understand how we are to regard those who are different from us and do not know Jesus as Savior?

5. What surprises you in a passage written over 3,000 years ago about God caring for foreigners?

Day 3 Read Acts 10:24-36

1. If you could immerse yourself in the culture of another country for a year, what country would you choose?

2. What prejudice did God open Peter's eyes to before Cornelius' men came for him?

3. In verses 34-35, what does Peter say determines who God accepts?

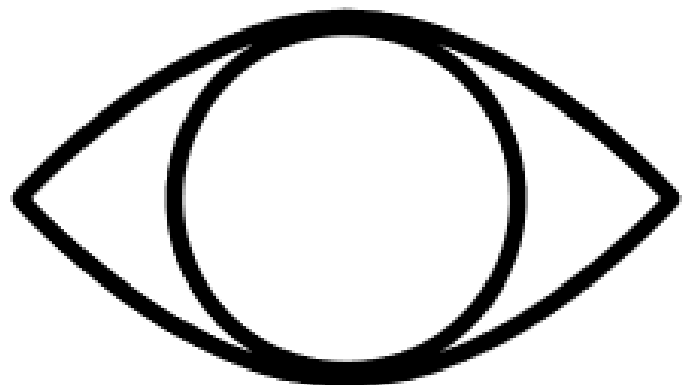
4. How has God had to change your thinking to line up with scripture?

5. How can Peter's example help us overcome our prejudices and fears that keep us from witnessing or listening to people that do not look or think like us?

Day 4 Read James 2:1-10

1. When have you made an incorrect assumption about someone based on a first impression?

2. What is James forbidding in this scripture?



3. What reasons does he give for discouraging it in verses 5-8?

4. How might we as believers show favoritism inside and outside the church today?

5. How can we try to guard against it at work, home, and church? What has helped you address this in your life?

Day 5 Read Psalm 133

1. When have you felt closest to someone who is not a family member?

2. What is the focus on praise in this psalm?

3. Does living in unity mean we have to agree on everything? If not, what does it mean?

4. Share an example of unity that made an impression on you.

5. What attitudes and practices do we need to have to help keep unity in the church and our relationships?

REVIVE The World.

Find a way to learn about the perspective of someone from another racial or cultural background. This might include watching a documentary, reading a book or having a conversation with a trusted person. Discrimination is a huge challenge, but when each of us is willing to grow in seeing through different eyes, we can share more of the love and grace of Jesus.