

**CURRICULUM**  
FEBRUARY 2023



# WHO AM I BECOMING?

**2 Corinthians 3:18**

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Intro Letter ..... 2**

**Series Overview ..... 3**

**Session 1 Meeting Handout ..... 5**

**Session 2 Meeting Handout ..... 7**

**Session 3 Meeting Handout ..... 9**

**Session 4 Meeting Handout ..... 11**

**Session 5 Meeting Handout ..... 13**

**Session 6 Meeting Handout ..... 15**

**Session 7 Meeting Handout ..... 17**

**Questions for Outcomes (Examen) ..... 18**

**Leaders' Guide ..... 19**



FEBRUARY 2023

Hey Church,

Last year the pastoral staff decided we wanted to “up our game” regarding intentional discipleship. To that end, we hired a consultant to give us advice on how to become more focused on discipleship. To be clear, discipleship has been happening at Ridgepoint from its inception decades ago. However, we felt that it would be good to refocus and retool.

We spent considerable time with the consultant rethinking how we can best reach our mission and goals. As the pastoral staff processed the feedback we received from him, our team came away with a plan to move forward. At the core of the plan are five outcomes that we believe every Ridgepoint attendee should aspire to:

- I am pursuing a deeper relationship with God
- I am centering my identity in Christ
- I am modeling my character after Christ
- I am growing in authentic community
- I am influencing others to Christ

As our renewed strategy came into focus, we decided to kick it off with a sermon series titled *Who Am I Becoming?*. Along with the sermon series, we also developed the curriculum you now have in your hands along with [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org).

The curriculum and associated website are the combined efforts of over 15 staff and members of Ridgepoint who contributed to the design and content for the project. It feels like a richly-colored mosaic and illustrates the Body of Christ at work through the many different gifts and talents of those involved.

As I prayerfully consider how the Lord may use the *Who Am I Becoming?* project in our midst, I am reminded of the Parable of Yeast in Luke 13:20-21: “Jesus taught this parable of yeast: ‘What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.’”

It’s our prayer that the “yeast” will start small and work its way through our congregation and that we may individually and as a church experience afresh the transformation that Christ offers to all believers.

We have purposely designed the curriculum to be flexible enough to be useful for Sunday School classes, small groups, mentoring and even personal devotions.

We pray that God richly blesses you and our church as we embark on the next phase of our journey together.

Blessings,

Pastor Joe Skillen  
For the Pastoral Team

# SERIES OVERVIEW

## Ridgepoint Mission & Values

**Our Mission:** We exist to help people find and follow Jesus.

**Our Values:** We aim to be real people with a real faith making a real impact.

**Target Outcomes** (desired traits) for a disciple attending Ridgepoint:

- I am pursuing a deeper relationship with God
- I am centering my identity in Christ
- I am modeling my character after Christ
- I am growing in authentic community
- I am influencing others to Christ

## This Series

The sermon series is six weeks long, and the related curriculum is seven weeks long. Session 1 is about transformation. Sessions 2-6 are the desired traits for a disciple attending Ridgepoint. You can think of transformation (Session 1) as the wrapper. If transformation is the wrapper, the desired traits are what is inside the box. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in following Jesus, we will live out the desired traits and be transformed. For the purposes of this series, transformation, discipleship and being formed in Christ all mean the same thing. These terms encompass the great commandments Jesus gave us: love God, love people.

**SESSION 1:** Living a Transformational Life

**SESSION 2:** Pursuing a Deeper Relationship with God

**SESSION 3:** Centering My Identity in Christ

**SESSION 4:** Modeling My Character after Christ

**SESSION 5:** Growing in Authentic Community

**SESSION 6:** Influencing Others to Christ

**SESSION 7:** Series Wrap Up (there is no sermon related to this session)

## Who Am I Becoming? Participants' Guide

There will be a printed *Participants' Guide* for each person who is in a group (or for individual devotions) that is going through the series. It will consist of this *Overview*, seven *Meeting Handouts*, *Questions for Outcomes* and *Leaders' Guide*.

## Spiritual Formation Exercises

Each week there will be several spiritual formation exercises, related to the topic, to pick from. Each group member will be asked to select one exercise or make up an exercise. The following week, the session will begin with each group member reporting how his/her exercise went.

### Why do we do spiritual formation exercises?

Simply put, we learn in a variety of ways, including action. Scholar Ken Boa says that Christian exercises are a form of "indirect preparedness." He has seen Christian exercises indirectly preparing him for discipleship moments. Think of the film *The Karate Kid* when Mr. Miyagi trains Daniel-san in the art form of karate. Miyagi teaches him household chores that double as vital karate movements. In the same way, Christian exercises indirectly train us for Christian living.

For example, fasting from food indirectly teaches us that we don't have to have what we want; it trains us to curb instant gratification. It teaches us patience. We work on that as we fast so we don't have to think about it when a tense moment requires patience. Patience will be second nature for us.

We also engage in Christian spiritual formation exercises because it helps to connect us to the Christian community. When a group of people does a common practice, it bonds them. It also allows each to teach and admonish one another in winsome ways.

## How to Get the Most out of This Course

Everyone is at a different and unique place in their faith journey. There is no cookie-cutter approach that will meet everyone where they are at. In that regard, we offer the menu below so that you can customize and determine the best way to engage with the course. As we take small steps of faith, the Holy Spirit will work within us to transform us to be more like Christ. You will get out of the study what you put into it. The table below lays out activities (disciplines) that can facilitate spiritual growth in your life. Please consider how you want to engage and come prepared to share your decision next week.

| ACTIVITY   | SELECT |
|--|--------|
| Attend meetings and do one exercise (the minimum)  | X      |
| Read the "Handout" for the next session and answer discussion questions before the next meeting  |        |
| Listen to the sermon   |        |
| Read the <i>Going Deeper Commentary</i> and prayerfully consider the implications for your life  |        |
| Explore the other online resources (video intro for each session, <i>Transformation Stories</i> , etc.)  |        |
| Engage with others about the topic outside of group  |        |
| Luke 11:9-10 (Go to <a href="http://whoamibecoming.org">whoamibecoming.org</a> > Session 1 > Ask, Seek, Knock) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask God for His input and insight regarding the topic each week</li> <li>• Listen for His answer</li> <li>• Obey (take action if necessary)</li> <li>• Repeat</li> </ul> |        |

## Online Resources

See [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) for resources:

- *Series Overview* PDF
- *Meeting Handout* PDF (seven)
- *Going Deeper Commentary* PDF (six)
- Sermon video (six)
- *Transformation Stories* PDF and/or video
- *Christian Spiritual Disciplines with Sample Exercises* PDF
- *Leaders' Guide* PDF
- *Questions for Outcomes (Examen)* PDF
- *Participants' Guide* PDF
- *Discerning God's Will* PDF
- *Writing Your Transformation Story* PDF

## Who Can Benefit from This Series?

- The 90-minute format of the *Meeting Handout* is designed for LifeGroups or other small groups.
- The 60-minute format of the *Meeting Handout* is designed for Sunday School classes and mentoring.
- The *Meeting Handout* can also be used for personal devotions. However, the maximum benefit will be realized when engaging together with at least one other person.

The *Who Am I Becoming?* team consists of: Joe Skillen, Jeff Stukey, Matt Ehresman, Chloe Willems, Brent Warkentin, Andy Owen, Jana Hildebrandt, Elaine Jelinek, Becky Spahr, Margaret Stukey, Kim Bontrager and Steve Blasdel. Additionally, thanks to the numerous people who shared their *Transformation Stories*.

# SESSION 1 – Living a Transformational Life

**Icebreaker** (15 MIN FOR 90-MIN FORMAT/5 MIN FOR 60-MIN FORMAT)

**Series Overview (to be read aloud in the meeting)** (10/10 MIN)

**Prayer** (1/1 MIN)

**Premise of this Session** (2/2 MIN)

As we follow Jesus, we transform. Transformation is fundamentally different from making “changes.” The original word for “transform” is *metamorphosis*, or evolving into a different being altogether.

**Key Scripture Passage** (2/2 MIN)

Romans 12:2 (HCSB) Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

**Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting)** (10/10 MIN)

Our human tendency is to conform to the age in which we live. We can get caught up in various idols or gods. Some examples might be comfort, addictions, rage, power, sex, pride, possessions, unhealthy comparisons, etc. Even good things like physical fitness can become an idol. Essentially, anything that we put first over our surrender to Christ will hinder God’s work in our lives.

**How do we overcome the gods of this age?** One primary way is by the renewing of our minds. The mind is the gateway to the heart. If we can think new thoughts, thoughts that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, anything that is excellent or praiseworthy (Phil 4:8), then it gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to effect change in our hearts. As our hearts change, we are transformed.

The lifelong goal for a Christian is to be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Transformation happens in two fundamental ways. The first is when we initially surrender to Christ—when we respond to His invitation to “follow me” (Matt 16:24). It is an event. It is one and done. We are adopted (Eph 1:5) as sons and daughters into the royal family. We have a new identity. Our eternal life with God is secure.

If our initial transformation is an event, the subsequent transformation is a journey. The invitation from Jesus to “follow me” extends for a lifetime. It is more like a marathon than a sprint. At times, it can be a slog. Sometimes transformation opportunities come to us uninvited in the form of trials. However, when we lean into following Jesus, transformation facilitates the abundant life (John 10:10).

**How do we take our faith from an event to a life-long journey?** We find some help in Psalm 84:5,7a where it says: “Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage [journey]. They go from strength to strength ...” After we initially accept Jesus’ invitation to follow him, we are to devote the rest of our lives to pilgrimage, to growing in Christlikeness, to the renewing of our minds so that we may discern God’s will for our lives. We become stronger (from strength to strength) in the faith as we journey with Christ.

Alexander Maclaren says of Psalm 84: “To live is to aspire; to cease to aspire is to die.” To aspire is to crave, to pursue, to strive for, to yearn for. As we yearn to be more like Christ and we feel that yearning realized, we find that we yearn for even more. This cycle of yearning is the “with God” life. The good news is that we are not alone to figure it out; with the power that comes from the Holy Spirit’s work within us, we are being transformed into Christ’s image with ever-increasing glory (2 Cor 3:18).

**How do we go about this renewing of the mind? How does transformation happen?** Perhaps a comparison of rowing and sailing analogies will help us gain a deeper understanding of how transformation works. Imagine that you are equally well-trained in the classroom in rowing and sailing and try your hand at both on the water. With rowing you observe that it is fairly simple to pick up, it totally depends on your power (for better or worse), you can row in any direction you desire, and you cannot cover distance very quickly.



With sailing, you observe that it is much more difficult to master than rowing, the boat is totally dependent on the wind for power, you are somewhat limited in the direction you can navigate by the direction the wind is blowing, and the speed of the boat on the water is in direct relation to the wind speed.

The rowboat is analogous to walking out the Christian life in the flesh; it is easy to walk in the flesh, it depends totally on your power to make changes in your life, you can go in any direction you desire, and the speed of your progress is limited by your own power. The sailboat is analogous to walking in the Spirit; it takes intentional effort to collaborate with the Holy Spirit (the flesh wars against the Spirit), you are totally dependent on the Spirit for the power to change your heart, you can get to places in life where you could never otherwise go, and the speed of change is dependent on the Spirit.

It is not about trying harder (rowing) to live the Christian life; it is about training more (sailing). As we train in righteousness and the spiritual disciplines, we can better position ourselves to take advantage of the times when the “wind” of the Holy Spirit “blows” across our “bow” (John 3:8). We connect; God perfects. By God’s grace, we are empowered to do what we could never do on our own.

Are you ready to set your sail and enjoy the journey? If so, the next six sessions will help you as you set your heart on pilgrimage, renew your mind and train in righteousness.

Who are you becoming?

### Discussion Questions (25/15 MIN)

1. **Can you think** about an area of your life that has undergone a small transformation? How about a drastic overhaul? What was memorable about that process?
2. **In the commentary above**, Maclaren suggested that aspiring/yearning is the essence of life. So, what do you yearn for in life? What are some things that matter most to you?
3. **Can you relate** to the Psalmist whose heart is set on the journey with God? Do you yearn for Christ?
4. **What is the relationship** between being transformed and discerning God’s will for your life?
5. **If you knew** that you could make one change in your life and it would yield other important developments, what one change would that be?

### Spiritual Formation Exercises (15/14 MIN)

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **Meditation.** Meditate on Psalm 84:5–7. Pray through the passage and consider journaling it. Try to do it several times in the coming week.
2. **Discernment and Action.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 1 > Ask, Seek Knock and read *Discerning God’s Will*. Take some time each day this week to sit quietly with God. Ask Him to speak to you and to be shown two things: “What have I let grow in my life that is replacing my hunger for You?” and “What do I need to do to get back to a place where only You can satisfy me?”
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 1 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video.
4. **Reflection.** Take some time this week to ask God to show ways in which He has transformed you over the course of your life and write down what comes to mind.
5. **Bible Journaling.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 1 > Journal Exercise. Listen to the video about journaling the Bible and transformation. Practice journaling the passage for this session.

### Prayer Time (10/1 MIN)

### Online Resources for this Session

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) for the **Series Intro** video. On the **Home** page, click on **Session 1** tab for: **Session 1 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Transformation Story** about going from tragic loss to recovery.



# SESSION 2 – Pursuing a Deeper Relationship with God

## Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went and possibly something you learned about God or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

## Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

## Premise of this Session (2/2 MIN)

Although we might think that “eternal life” is only something to enjoy after we die, Jesus says that eternal life is to know God.

## Key Scripture Passage (2/2 MIN)

John 17:3 (NIV) Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

## Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting) (10/10 MIN)

What is your first thought when you hear that those who believe in Jesus are guaranteed eternal life? Do you immediately imagine heaven, new bodies, and age after age of perfect peace? What if you were told that the eternal life Jesus is speaking of is about a life in the here and now, in our current bodies, amid all our familiar surrounding circumstances?

What if eternal life isn't just about the position of our existence in time without end? What if Jesus is asking the Father to give His disciples a quality of life, to live now, resembling His own—one rising out of the quality of relationship He has with His Father?

During His earthly ministry, Jesus exhibited an awareness of the fullness of who God is, an intimate knowledge of His character, and an absolute love for His ways. Nothing could move Jesus from His devotion to the Father and His desires. We see this in Matthew 4:1-11, when Jesus was tempted by Satan. He steadfastly refused to be enticed. And, again in Matthew 26:39 in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

In return, nothing can move the Father's devotion away from His people. Romans 8:35 says: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”

Jesus prays that His disciples will have the same relationship with the Father that He does. Do we want that relationship? Or have we convinced ourselves that it was meant only for Jesus, and we must muddle through our lives until He returns in glory? Can we believe that God wants to give us this quality of life now? If we answer yes, how do we get it?

**How do we develop an intimate relationship with another person?** First, we must listen to them and understand the various ways they want to be known (throughout scripture, God gives us many ways to know Him). Then we must invest time and effort to pursue the other person. In similar fashion, we develop an intimate relationship with God by seeking Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Perhaps the first step in experiencing an intimate relationship with God is deciding what kind of relationship with God we expect. Is He an object we aim our desires at, expecting gratification, a sort of cosmic Santa Claus? Do we want Him because He can give us good things if we behave ourselves? Is He someone we fear, who demands we perform perfectly or be condemned? Or do we want to know Him because He created us in His image and desires to be our Father and adopt us into His family as sons and daughters?

Listening for God's invitation to more life with Him, answering the above questions, and committing to pursuing Him all require vulnerability, a willingness to become helpless and (spiritually) naked before Him. It also requires turning away from the gods and idols of this age.

Thankfully, we have been given a series of practices called “spiritual disciplines,” which we will learn more about as we continue this course. These practices have developed over generations by faithful followers of Jesus to help us receive the gift of the eternal life Jesus prayed for us, “disciplines” that lead us into a mature understanding of God and His ways and prepare us to walk with others in their life with God too.

As we close this part of Session 2, consider the story of Jacob’s pursuit of Rachel from the book of Genesis. Rachel’s father Laban agreed to give Rachel to Jacob in marriage after seven years of faithful work for Laban. Think about that; seven years of work sounds like a long time. So, we are surprised to read that these seven years to Jacob only seemed like “a few days to him because of his love for her” (Genesis 29:20). That’s what a loving relationship looks like. Time and hardship and toil seem insignificant because our desires are set on one thing that matters most.

That’s what it will be like – what it is like – to pursue God. Whatever time it takes will seem like nothing because of the love that we have for Him which will transform our temporal existence into the “eternal life.” Starting now.

Who are you becoming?

### **Discussion Questions (25/10 MIN)**

1. **Read** John 17:3. Do you believe Jesus is talking about a life after death in His prayer? Why? Why not?
2. **Name** some of the “eternal” characteristics of God.
3. **Read** John 10:10 in the HCSB version. What does an abundant life look like to you?
4. **Consider** Matthew 4:1-11, the story of Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness. What are some of the characteristics of an abundant life from Satan’s point of view and from Jesus’s point of view?
5. **How do you think** our perception of current affairs in the world would change if we pursued the abundant, eternal life of Jesus?

### **Spiritual Formation Exercises (15/14 MIN)**

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **Journal the Word.** Spend some time in the Bible this week searching for passages where God communicates His desire for you. Write them out in your journal along with your responses to them.
2. **Meditation.** Schedule a time once a day to pray Psalm 139:1-4, 23-24. After you pray, sit quietly and listen for God to reveal to you what He sees in you.
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 2 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video.
4. **Breath Prayer.** Practice breath prayer using Jeremiah 31:3 as follows. Breathe in – “I have loved you with everlasting love.” Breathe out: “I have continued My faithfulness to you.” Do it several times throughout the day. Meditate on how the reminder of God’s love for you makes you feel or if/ how it changes your responses to life around you.
5. **Service.** Ask God to give you an opportunity to sit with someone this week who is struggling in some way. If/when it comes, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you towards a more Jesus-like response as you make yourself available to that person’s needs. If the opportunity doesn’t come, meditate on if/how intentionally making yourself available changed something for you.

### **Prayer Time (10/1 MIN)**

### **Online Resources for this Session**

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) and click on **Session 2** tab for: **Session 2 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Transformation Story** about being transformed in the aftermath of severe anxiety attacks.

## SESSION 3 – Centering My Identity in Christ

### Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went, and possibly something you learned about God, or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

### Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

### Premise of this Session (2/2 MIN)

When we were born, at the core of our essence was an identity that God dreamed up for us. But life and the world layer lies and false identities on top, and we tend to lose sight of who we really were created to be. As we follow Christ, our original identity is renewed.

### Key Scripture Passage (2/2 MIN)

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting) (10/10 MIN)

(Credit to Jamie Winship at [identityexchange.com](http://identityexchange.com) for some of the insights for this lesson)

At Ridgepoint we talk about the values of "being, knowing and doing." We desire to BE followers of Jesus who KNOW who we are meant to BE, and who KNOW who God is and what He is calling us to DO. We start with knowing who we are, so that our identity can be informed by who God is. With our God-given identity secure in Christ, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the "good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

When asked who we are, we often mention our job or our role in our family. While these labels can be helpful, they do not define our God-given identity at its core, which is that we are the beloved of God, no matter what we have done with our lives. We are God's children, adopted into His family. We are a new creation. We are overcomers by the blood of the Lamb. This is our God-given identity. And our enemy, the devil, does not want us to understand and live in our true identity in Christ.

For the purposes of our discussion, there are two kinds of identities: our true God-given identity and our false identity that comes from the world. In Genesis, Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, and their true identity included naming the animals and being caretakers of the Garden. All was well until the serpent came along and questioned their identity *and* their view of God. When they started to believe his lies and question their identity, they disobeyed God. Ever since then, we have all struggled with our identity and how we view God.

The false identity is the self that develops over time to self-protect and/or self-promote. We have both positive and negative experiences throughout life that cause us to adjust to get the outcomes we want. If I am a good athlete, I might learn to enjoy the praise. Suddenly the game is more about performance and praise than it is about the fun of playing. Or someone might have criticized me when I was young and, as a result, I label myself as a failure or inadequate. We might live feeling like a failure, or perhaps we become overachievers trying to prove our worth. We tend to compare ourselves to others and measure ourselves against the world's standards. We adapt to minimize the pain, fear, or sense that we lack in something.

Our true self is who God made us to be in our mother's womb; it is given to us, not chosen like our false identity. It is not determined by our gender, job, political party, or religion (although both identities will inform these). Learning about our true identity often takes a lifetime of learning to understand it through being in relationship with God and others. It takes unpacking the lies we believe about ourselves and the misunderstandings we have about God. Our true self lives in peace, abundance and intimacy with its Creator. We have both a shared identity as sons and daughters of the Father and specific identities that are unique to each of us.

Oftentimes, our false identity includes measuring ourselves against others. We internalize lies that we are

stupid, inadequate, worthless, or on the other end, important, smart or talented. What we forget is that we were never meant to live in a context of the measurements that impact our identity. We were meant to live in the measureless love of our Creator. Instead of constantly comparing our false selves, our true self can live in peace trusting who God is and what He is up to and that we have everything we need to live an abundant and confident life.

**How do we find our true identity?** We can start by asking God: “What do you want me to know about my identity? What part of my identity is not from you? What about how I see you keeps me from fully following you?” This means we have to learn how to “crawl up into our Father’s lap,” quiet the “noise” and listen and then respond. It will almost certainly involve confession, repentance and a willingness to be transformed.

When God dreamed each of us up, before we were even born, we were never meant to live burdened under false identities. We were meant to experience our eternal true identity and live life to the fullest. Our character, which we will discuss in Session #4, does not define who we are; it flows out of our identity.

When we live in our false self, we are careful to protect who WE are and prove how valuable WE are. But

when we live in our true self, we become others-focused followers of Jesus who unconditionally love even our enemies, just as Jesus loved us while we were still His enemies. Who are you beyond being a son or daughter of the Most High (our shared identity in Christ)? What is your *unique* identity? Perhaps you are a champion of the marginalized or a “servant warrior.” Maybe you are a peacemaker for those in conflict or a person of blessing.

Who are you becoming?

## Discussion Questions (25/10 MIN)

1. **Discuss** some of the attributes of your true kingdom identity as found in Rom 8:15-16, 2 Cor 5:17, Rom 8:17, Rom 8:37, Rev 12:11, 1 Pet 1:4, 1 Cor 6:19, Col 3:12 and Col 1:13.
2. **Share one memory** where you were hurt by words or actions that has had a lasting impact on your identity. Why do you think that memory has stuck with you?
3. **As you have followed Jesus**, what are you passionate about? Worship? Helping or encouraging others? Teaching? Giving generously? Caring for the marginalized? How could those be a clue to your true identity?
4. **Consider the story** of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). What do we know about him? Imagine the taunting he might have heard as a child about being short. How might that have contributed to him becoming who he was? How did his identity change after Jesus spent time with him?

## Spiritual Formation Exercises (15/14 MIN)

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **Dealing with Fear.** What do you fear the most in life? Why is that? What does that fear say about how you see God? Listen and respond. Ask God to correct any part in how you see Him that is wrong.
2. **Discernment and Action.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 3 > Ask, Seek, Knock and read Discerning God’s Will. It is likely that most of us believe lies about ourselves that we have been hanging on to for some time. And we are so used to the lies that we are not aware of them. Ask God to reveal the lies. Write a prayer from Col 2:7, John 15:13, Rom 6:11, 1 Cor 6:20, Rom 8:2 or Phil 4:7.
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 3 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video.
4. **Quiet Time.** It can be easy to fall into the trap of seeing devotions as a responsibility. But what if you saw your quiet time as an opportunity to be in your favorite place with your Creator and Lover of your soul? Find that place and practice “climbing into your Father’s lap” each day.
5. **Examen.** Each day this week, ask God where you responded out of self-protection or self-promotion or where you confused your false identity with your true identity. Listen to His answer and respond.

## Prayer Time (10/1 MIN)

## Online Resources for this Session

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) and click on **Session 3** tab for: **Session 3 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Transformation Story** about a doctor overcoming addiction to prescription drugs.

## SESSION 4 – Modeling My Character after Christ

### Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went, and possibly something you learned about God, or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

### Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

### Premise of this Session (2/2 MIN)

We live as Christians to empty ourselves (even forfeiting advantages) so that others can be lifted. God gives grace to the humble but opposes the proud.

### Key Scripture Passage (2/2 MIN)

Philippians 2:5-11<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting) (10/10 MIN)

In Paul Baloche's song *Jesus You Are*, the opening line of the chorus is this: "Jesus, you are, you are everything I'm not. But everything that I want to be ..."

In Philippians 2, Paul shared what some think might have been one of the first Christian hymns, a beautiful song about Jesus that carries inside it the implications of what it means to be like Him. His words are about what we are to do and who we are to be as His disciples.

At the heart of the idea of following God is the desire to shed our old lives and to live as a new person. The key feature of this process is learning to "let go" of who we once were and to embrace our new identity. This is a difficult process because we are used to who we've always been. We tend to struggle letting go of the old life and claiming the new one. Let's take a look at a few examples from the Bible.

Consider Adam and Eve who chose selfish ambition over obedience. Or the Israelites who, after given the Ten Commandments to obey, struggled to do so. Or Jonah, who fought against God's instructions: "Go to the city of Nineveh and preach against it" (Jonah 1:2). Or Peter, who denied he knew Jesus three times. Or the disciples arguing over who was the greatest.

**What's the deal!? Why is it so hard to want to follow God?** Well, thankfully Jesus got to the heart of it; His clarity on the topic helps to define the chief issue. When asked what was of utmost importance for a child of God, Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind" (Matthew 22:36-38). "Letting go" of the old self and taking on a new self truly is a struggle over what we choose to love.

Paul outlined in Philippians how Jesus chose to love the Father and humanity and stressed that Jesus was different. Jesus chose obedience over self, so to become like Jesus we must choose obedience as well. Keep in mind that before Paul shared about Jesus' obedience and sacrifices, he gave a command to the Philippians: "do nothing from selfish ambition ... but in humility count others as more significant ..." (Phil 2:3-4). In Paul's mind, humility is the practicality of love. When we are humble, we love, and when we love someone, we humble ourselves for their benefit. Humility means giving up (some of) our "rights and privileges" for the sake of others and holding their needs as important. Humility not only takes care of a "need in the moment" but it also reorders the world.

According to Marty Solomon (BEMA Discipleship), rabbis from the Jewish tradition taught that the mark of a God-following society is how that society treats the powerless and the vulnerable. In their view, a godless society pushes out the weak towards the margins to fend for themselves. But, a godly society brings its weaker members into the “center of the camp” to be cared for and protected. In those societies, the strong give up (some of) their space for the good of others.

The *godly* person says in his heart: “From my position in life, what can I do in my sphere of influence, at my expense, for the powerless and vulnerable?” In contrast, the *ungodly* person says in his heart: “From my position in life in my sphere of influence, how can I take advantage of the powerless and vulnerable, at their expense?”

Paul clearly believed in this mindset of empowering the powerless and vulnerable too, and implored Christians to do the same. This certainly was Paul’s aim as he wrote letters to Christians, dotted all over the map of the first century world, that churches would be full of humble people who resembled the way of their master, Jesus Christ.

That desire to be like Jesus ends in humble actions, but it starts with faith-filled prayer and worship. Consider the chorus of the song that began our Session outline:

Jesus, you are, you are everything I’m not  
But everything that I want to be;  
Jesus you are, you are the maker of my heart  
Finish what you’ve started in me.  
Amen.

Who are you becoming?

## Discussion Questions (25/10 MIN)

1. **In Philippians 2:6**, what do you think it means that Jesus “did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage?”
2. **Why do you think** Paul is writing on this subject to the Philippian church?
3. **List some things** going on that might cause Paul to write this letter to today’s church.
4. **In what ways** might we bring the weaker members of society to the “center of the camp?”
5. **How do you see** humility “reordering the world?”

## Spiritual Formation Exercises (15/14 MIN)

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **The Word.** Rewrite the key passage for this session in your own words. Try writing it as a news story or a poem or a song lyric. Let your heart lead you in expressing your thoughts about Jesus.
2. **Journal.** Search online for “injustice in the world.” Make note of some of the “injustices” and ask for wisdom and guidance on how you might be able to make an impact in one area.
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 4 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video.
4. **Discernment and Action.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 1 > Ask, Seek, Knock and read *Discerning God’s Will*. Find a quiet place once a day and imagine sitting with Jesus. Ask Him to tell you what privileges and rights you use to your advantage. Ask Him to show you how to use them for others.
5. **Prayer.** Practice breath prayer. Breathe in slowly with the words “Jesus you love me,” hold for a count of two, and breathe out slowly with the words “You gave your life for me.” Do it several times a day throughout the week.

## Prayer Time (10/1 MIN)

## Online Resources for this Session

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) and click on **Session 4** tab for: **Session 4 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Transformation Story** about transformation in the aftermath of a near-death experience.



# SESSION 5 – Growing in Authentic Community

## Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went, and possibly something you learned about God, or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

## Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

## Premise of this Session (2/2 MIN)

The Church is designed by God to fulfill a vivid reality of Abraham's promise: a global community of God. Christian discipleship has always depended on two risky endeavors: trust yourself into God's hands and choose to live in faith communities where everyone can find a place to belong.

## Key Scripture Passage (2/2 MIN)

Romans 15:7 (NIV) Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

## Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting) (10/10 MIN)

Have you ever spent a holiday alone? Take Christmas for example. You can practice all the same traditions you've done with your family or friends dozens of times ... set up the tree, drive around and look at lights with hot chocolate, read the Christmas story from Luke 2 by the fireplace, attend the Christmas Eve service, eat a slow-cooked ham. While it can still be a sweet celebration, there is something special about being together with others that allows us to experience the holiday season on a more fulfilling level.

In the same way, although the life of a Christian disciple revolves primarily around our vertical relationship (our relationship with God), we have been given horizontal relationships (our relationships with others) as a means to experience our relationship with God more deeply and richly.

Community is a theme that runs through the Bible from the very beginning. We see the first mention of "us" in Genesis 1:26, where God speaks to the other members of the Trinity, saying, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness" (emphasis added). One chapter later, after the creation of the first man, Adam, we read that "it is not good that the man should be alone," and so God fashions Eve.

Humans were created both *out of community* and *for community*.

In Genesis 12, God promises Abraham a great nation of descendants. This nation would become Israel, God's chosen people. And now, thousands of years later, we are given the opportunity (and the command) to continue to choose people. To choose community.

Many of us tend to shy away from community out of fear of rejection; it's a vulnerable thing to trust another human being with our truest selves. In today's world, it often feels easier to hide behind the highlight reels on Instagram and our perfect profile pictures on Facebook. And yet, these shallow forms of "friendship" can never replace the real thing.

We were not made to do this alone. Humans need encouragement. We need accountability. We crave togetherness. And yet, more people are lonely than ever – even in a room full of people – because we often refuse to connect authentically. We can tend to only allow others to see the curated version of ourselves, robbing others of really knowing us.

To immerse ourselves in community is to open ourselves up to being known. And that can be scary for some. But in allowing others to truly know us, we are also opening ourselves up to encouragement, accountability, deep joy, and growth.

Not only do we need to push ourselves to be vulnerable and real with others, but we need to conduct ourselves in a manner that allows and encourages others to do the same. Are you a person who makes others feel welcome and safe to be themselves? Or might others hide around you because of fear of rejection? As believers, we are charged to "accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Romans 15:7).



Sometimes, it can be hard to let go of our expectations of others or our expectations of what community should look like. There will always be someone whose authentic self is more challenging for us to deal with than we'd prefer. However, community is not just about what a group of people can do for us, but what we can do for one another. We are not just to look only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:4).

Cultivating a space where authentic community will thrive takes work, but it is worthy of our time and energy. It not only does our souls good, but it brings God praise and glory. More often than not, we will find that this kind of community will push us deeper into the presence of God, encourage and grow our faith, and give us a feeling of purpose.

Who are you becoming?

### **Discussion Questions (25/10 MIN)**

1. **Have you ever** spent a holiday alone? How did that feel different from celebrating with family or loved ones?
2. **Have you ever** experienced a "close-knit" community (either inside or outside the church)? What were some of the characteristics that brought that group of people close together?
3. **Are you** a person who tends to lean in or back away from community? Why do you think that is?
4. **What is** the most challenging aspect of being in community with others for you? (Vulnerability, time commitment, etc.)
5. **Do you struggle** more with feeling accepted or being accepting of others?

### **Spiritual Formation Exercises (15/14 MIN)**

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **Meal.** Take someone out for a meal. During the time together, focus on encouraging him or her.
2. **Encourage.** Write a letter or an email to someone who has enriched your life. Note ways they have impacted you and thank them for caring for you.
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 5 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video
4. **Prayer.** Pray for every member of your group every day this coming week.
5. **Journaling.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 5 > Journal Exercise. Listen to the video about journaling the Bible and transformation. Meditate on and journal your thoughts about Romans 15:7.

### **Prayer Time (10/1 MIN)**

### **Online Resources for this Session**

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) and click on **Session 5** tab for: **Session 5 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Transformation Story** about being rooted and established in God's love.

# SESSION 6 – Influencing Others to Christ

## Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went, and possibly something you learned about God, or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

## Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

## Premise of this Session (2/2 MIN)

The global Christian family, as diverse as it is, is unified around the Great Commandment that Jesus gave us: to love God, neighbor, and self. The love of one another (in particular) signifies to the watching world that we are Jesus' disciples. Therefore, our impact on the world around us is instigated and accomplished by love.

The cross of Jesus launched a new way to be human and a new community of love. His forgiveness of sinners started a new economy of benevolence and grace. The primary vocation of the disciple is to imagine a world of healing, peace, love and grace and act as if it is already so.

This challenged the native operating software for humanity before Jesus, which assumed that competition, earning and spending, winning and losing, was how the world was ordered and developed. But that age is passing away, and a new era has dawned. Praise the Lord!

## Key Scripture Passage (2/2 MIN)

Matt 22:37-40 (NIV) <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

## Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting) (10/10 MIN)

Dr. Suess said: "To the world you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world." Who is that one person for me?

- Perhaps it is the neighbor who has no family or friends nearby, is old and has a multitude of physical ailments, and is difficult to talk to and understand.
- Perhaps it is a high school classmate that I have not connected with in awhile who recently posted heartbreaking news on Facebook about a cancer diagnosis.
- Perhaps it is a business associate who lost his wife of 40 years after a brief, but devastating illness and is absolutely broken.
- Perhaps it is a cousin whom I rarely see, at a funeral, who is, for a moment, open to talking about significant life issues.

Jesus said that we are to love others like we love ourselves. How would I want to be loved if I were one of the people mentioned above? It might be a listening ear. It might be a card with thoughtful and caring words. It might be a telephone call just to check in. It might be thought-provoking questions. It might be a meal. It might be merely asking how they are doing and really meaning it. Whatever love would look like, it for sure would involve action. We all have good intentions. However, love that is not expressed is not love.

An "expert in the law," wanting to justify himself, in the context of the Great Commandment, asked Jesus: "Who is my neighbor?" In answer to his question, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), where He compares and contrasts a Jewish priest, a Levite and a Samaritan. The priest and the Levite were Jews. The Jews hated the Samaritans. The Levites were members of the Hebrew tribe who served as assistants to the priests in the worship in the temple.

The story is about a traveler (implicitly understood to be Jewish) who is stripped of his clothing, beaten and left for dead alongside the road. The priest and the Levite come by and both avoid the man. Finally, a Samaritan comes by and stops to help. It seems logical to assume that if anyone would care for a person in

such a situation, the priest and the Levite should certainly be at the top of the list. And, since the Jews hated the Samaritans, it would also seem likely that the Samaritan might feel justified in ignoring the Jewish man lying on the roadside. It appears that one point Jesus was making is that merely being religious does not fulfill the Great Commandment to love my neighbor as myself. And that *anyone* has the potential to love his or her neighbor. In the passage, it says that the “neighbor” is the one who shows mercy.

We might understand “neighbor” to be anyone who is in our sphere of influence. That might mean my literal neighbor, someone sitting next to me on an airplane, relatives, co-workers, a “friend” on Facebook, or basically anyone with whom I come into contact with.

We are called to extend the same mercy which we have received from God through Christ to people in our sphere of influence. We do this by acknowledging and affirming and showing kindness to others. To accomplish this, it likely means slowing down and paying more attention to what is going on around us. It means listening for the still small voice of the Holy Spirit prompting us to take action. It will probably inconvenience us. It certainly means sharing the good news of the Gospel, when the time is right. It will likely mean taking small risks in stepping out in faith, and it means putting others’ needs before our own.

If we want to influence others to Christ, it will mean that we, like the Samaritan, intentionally show mercy to people in a world that is spiritually dying around us.

Who are you becoming?

### Discussion Questions ( 25 / 10 MIN )

1. **What are some ways** that you were loved into the kingdom?
2. **What does it look like** to you to practically love your neighbor as yourself?
3. **Discuss** the statement that “love that is not expressed is not love.” In what ways does love in this context differ from the world’s idea of love?
4. **Who** is a “neighbor” that you’re struggling to love well?
5. **How have you experienced** someone’s heart softening to the gospel due to loving them well? (Or, the opposite, how have you seen someone’s heart grow hard to the gospel because they were not loved well?)

### Spiritual Formation Exercises ( 15 / 14 MIN )

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **List of relationships.** Make a list of people in your life (coworkers, friends from church, neighbors, family, etc). Pray over your relationships, asking God who He is inviting you to intentionally show His love to in this season. Take action.
2. **Prayer Walk.** Go on a prayer walk in your neighborhood, workplace, or another place you frequent. Invite God to use His followers (including you!) in these spaces to influence others and love well.
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 6 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video.
4. **Reach Out.** Think of a person in your life who is difficult to love. Look for a way to reach out to them in love this week.
5. **Memorize/Meditate/Pray.** Memorize Matt 22:37-40 and meditate on it and pray through it this week.

### Prayer Time ( 10 / 1 MIN )

### Online Resources for this Session

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) and click on **Session 6** tab for: **Session 6 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Boots on the Ground**, a sermon by Andy Owen about having a missional mindset.

## SESSION 7 – Series Wrap Up

### Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went, and possibly something you learned about God, or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

### Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

### Discussion Questions/Sharing (46/21 MIN)

1. **What has been one highlight** of the *Who Am I Becoming?* series for you?
2. **Share briefly** about one time in your life where you can see how God has transformed you.
3. **Going forward**, what is one thing you would like to work on?

### Writing Your Story (3/3 MIN)

Consider writing out a *Transformation Story* from your life (not your life story).

- Watch the video and read the PDF about telling your story at [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 7 > Writing Your Story
- Share your story with your spouse, or other close friend or in your small group.
- If you feel comfortable sharing your story with us, email it to [joe@ridgepointwichita.com](mailto:joe@ridgepointwichita.com). We may post some stories on the website (with permission).

### Final Spiritual Formation Exercise (2/2 MIN)

Consider using the *Christian Spiritual Disciplines* document at [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 7 > Spiritual Disciplines to do a weekly spiritual formation exercise, cycling through the disciplines, one discipline per week. To further enrich your experience, do it with another person. Or, alternately, share what you are doing each week with another person.

### Questions for Outcomes (Examen) (2/2 MIN)

Consider answering the questions on the *Questions for Examen* at the end of the *Participants' Guide*. The document is designed to be used once a year as a sort of spiritual checkup.

### Feedback (1/1 MIN)

We would love to hear your feedback on the curriculum. And, if you do the *Christian Spiritual Disciplines* exercises, tell us how it goes. Email [joe@ridgepointwichita.com](mailto:joe@ridgepointwichita.com).

### Closing Prayer Time (10/10 MIN)

Pray for one another based upon what each person would like to work on going forward.

# QUESTIONS FOR OUTCOMES (EXAMEN)

Socrates once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” While this may seem a bit strong, there are certainly passages in the Bible that would support this idea. Psalm 139:23–24 says: <sup>23</sup> “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” The Psalmist is asking for input and surrendering to the answer he receives from God.

Personal reflection is a critical part of the Christian life. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul (speaking to a community of Christians) urges the Corinthians to “examine themselves to see whether we are in the faith” and to “test ourselves.” The purpose of routine reflection is not to compare ourselves to others. It certainly isn’t to make us feel bad about ourselves. It helps us to clarify how we’d like to develop our own faith. It provides clear action steps. It invites help and accountability in our lives.

Take some time to answer the questions below. It would be helpful to write out your answers and then, in a year from now, review your answers and write out new responses.

## **I am pursuing a deeper relationship with God**

- In what ways in the past year have you clarified your commitment to Jesus?
- What habit or practice helped you to develop your relationship to God this past year?
- What is your fondest memory with God from this past year?

## **I am centering my identity in Christ**

- What is an area of your life that became more Christlike this year?
- When did someone mention that you showed great faith this year?
- What was your most vivid Christian moment this year?

## **I am modeling my character after Christ**

- How often do you read the Gospels to discover who Jesus is?
- Is there a story or teaching of Jesus that has changed the way that you live your life this year?
- What significant change have you seen in your life in the past year that stems from your relationship with Jesus?

## **I am growing in authentic community**

- During the past year, how did you support someone in the midst of great need?
- Who has been able to help you to carry a personal burden this year?
- Who taught you the most about the Christian life this year?

## **I am influencing others to Christ**

- How has your faith given you a deeper love for all people?
- How have you served your neighbors, coworkers, peers, or family members this year?
- How confident and comfortable were you in faith conversations this past year?

# LEADERS' GUIDE

**Thanks for being willing to lead a group!** Small group leaders, Sunday school class leaders and mentors are on the front line of pastoral care.

Pastoral care is essential: “to equip His [God’s] people for works of service, so that the body of Christ [the Church] may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:12-13).

## Spiritual Formation (Transformation)

The *Who Am I Becoming?* meeting format is designed to encourage spiritual formation (transformation). As you go through the series, you might think of your role as pastoral care, or leader or facilitator (not necessarily as teacher).

One of the primary goals of the meeting is to encourage everyone to participate, especially on the first section “Sharing About Exercises” and the section toward the end of each session “Spiritual Formation Exercises.” Sharing about exercises happens at the beginning of each meeting for Sessions 2-7 and is related to the exercise each person picked the week before. If you don’t get anything else done in the meeting, the “Sharing About Exercises” and “Spiritual Formation Exercises” sections are the most critical pieces.

One principle at work here is that you are helping people move from the “lecture” to the “workshop.” Consider an analogy:

You are in woodworking class in high school where you listen to the instructor explain how to make a coffee table. You take a written test on the subject and pass the test with flying colors. A year later, after you are out of high school, you decide to build a coffee table on your own. Unfortunately, it occurs to you that you don’t know how to operate the saw or the lathe or the spray paint gun. So ... you give up because you are not equipped. You had great head knowledge, but no real-world practical knowledge or experience.

Now imagine an alternative scenario, where in high school you actually build a coffee table in the workshop. Your instructor explains how to build the table and guides you every step of the way. You make mistakes along the way, and he helps you correct them as you go. You learn from your mistakes. You also observe others making coffee tables. A year later, after you are out of school, you decide to build an end table to accompany your coffee table. Although you have never built one before, you have the baseline skills to make a piece of furniture. You build it, and it turns out pretty well because you were equipped! In addition to great head knowledge, you had real-world practical knowledge and experience.

In similar fashion, in a spiritual sense, we as leaders are helping people move from the lecture to the workshop. The lecture being the curriculum that we present in the meeting. The workshop is analogous to each member doing an exercise outside the meeting that relates to the concepts they are learning about in the meeting. Additionally, hearing others share about their experiences regarding their exercises reinforces understanding of the principles and encourages the group members to keep plugging away.

Having the “Sharing About Exercises” section at the first part of the meeting has the potential of transforming your meeting into a time where people are talking about how Jesus is at work transforming their lives, in contrast, for example, to how their favorite sports team is doing. And while talking about sports can be a way of building relationships, we are aiming at intentional discipleship, not merely fellowship. Our goal is to provide a context in which people can grow in their faith and be transformed.

So, in this context, your role is keeping the meeting on track, encouraging everyone to participate and being empathetic and caring to members of the group. The teaching, if you will, ends up coming from the members of the group as much as from the material itself.

## Nuts & Bolts

Each week at the meeting, encourage group members to go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) to check out the “Online Resources for this Session” at the end of the *Meeting Handout*.

It is important to review each session’s *Meeting Handout* before the session. Consider how much time you

have to devote to the curriculum and adjust accordingly. The *Meeting Handouts* have suggested times for each part of the meeting; the first time listed in the meeting handout for each section is for a 90-minute format and the second time is for a 60-minute format.

In order to allow for everyone to participate, it is important to consider group size. Small group research shows that twelve people is the upper limit for group size if you want to optimize interactions. Eight people is probably ideal. So, if you have a Sunday School class or small group with more than twelve people, it's probably best to split up into smaller groups for this series. Additionally, this provides an opportunity for others to lead.

We encourage you to have group members take turns reading out loud the material in the *Series Overview* and the *Meeting Handouts*. It breaks things up to share in the reading, and it also gives everyone a chance to participate. Regarding the *Series Overview*, take time to discuss the various sections as you read through it.

At the beginning of each meeting (for Sessions 2-7), unapologetically go around the room and ask each group member how their exercise from the previous week went. This is loving accountability.

At the end of each meeting, when group members are picking an exercise, unapologetically go around the room and give each person a chance to pick an exercise or pass. There may be times when life is just too hard for a given group member to pick an exercise, knowing they will not be able to do it. This is an opportunity to be gracious.

At the end of the meeting, point people to the website which has many resources for going deeper. The first week, you might consider having everyone in the group bring up the website on their smartphones and navigate through the website with them.

Thanks again for being willing to lead your group through the *Who Am I Becoming?* curriculum!

### **The *Who Am I Becoming?* Team**







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