

WEEK 6: HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF MY LIFE? PART 1

Objective: Celebrate freedom from strongholds and nurture a heart of service by gaining insight into the needs of our communities (both local and global), and moving into a serving lifestyle modeled by Jesus.

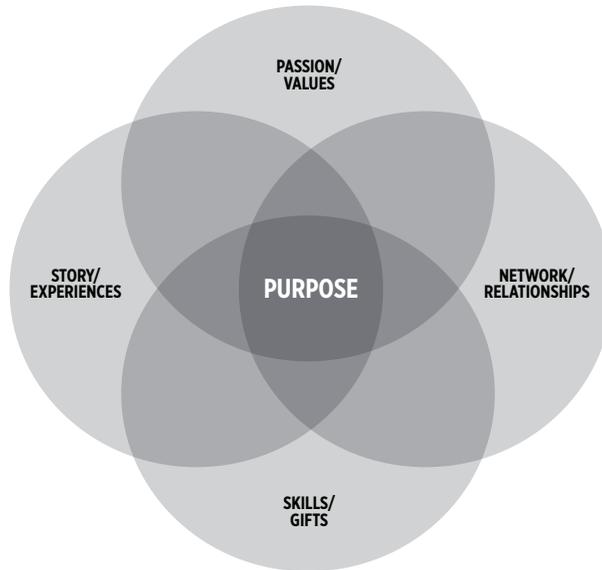
PRAYER POINTS

- People would begin to see they have a purpose bigger than living for themselves. Pray they would see how Jesus lived and modeled this purpose for us.
- God would change their hearts and give them the humility, the heart, and the compassion of Jesus to serve others in our broken and hurting world.
- Group members continue to experience freedom from strongholds and grow in the Truth that sets them free.
- God would show you whom He wants to be future Life Group leaders and Rooted leaders. Review the qualities of a leader from week 4.
- Pray your group will see its purpose collectively and individually.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Follow up with anyone who was absent last week. Arrange a time to pray with them for freedom from their strongholds.
- If your group members continue to sit in the same seats, change dynamics by having them switch seats. It will stimulate different discussions.

The diagram below is a helpful tool as your group discusses spiritual gifts, serving, and the purpose God has for us.



GROUP TIME

15 minutes - Welcome and Reconnection Time

Ice breaker question if you need it:

- Since we last met, what has been a highlight of your week?

15 minutes - Follow Up: last week's discussion and prayer time on strongholds

- Revisit what you covered last week on warfare and strongholds to see how everyone is doing since the last meeting.
- How did last week's discussion impact you this week? How do you see strongholds in a different way? Did you find freedom from strongholds or did you find yourself more able to lessen their grip in your life?
- Don't spend more than 15 minutes recapping last week as you will want to leave plenty of time for this week's topic.

15 minutes - Introductory Questions

- If necessary, have two or three people share their two-minute story.

The theme: Jesus' Heart

- Who do you know that reflects the heart of Jesus in the way they live their life?
- What would Jesus do in your community today? Where would He spend His time?

45 minutes - Discussion

- What does it look like to have the heart of Jesus today in our lives?
- Do you think people see Jesus in you?
- How have you seen God use people to make a difference in the world?
- To which of the six sectors of society are you called?
- What do you think your purpose is?
- If the power to shake the bridge comes from the Holy Spirit, have you seen any bridges shaking lately as you have been standing on them?

Leader note: Take notes when each person shares their story, things they question or may not believe, and breakthroughs in their spiritual journey.

- Ask everyone to complete the Spiritual Gifts Assessment online this week. The website address is on pg. 104 in the Appendix.

10 minutes - Discussion about becoming a Life Group

Discuss the idea of going on as a Life Group, and see what the response is. If you have someone in the group who has already agreed to lead, share that news with the group. Talk about what a Life Group is and how it will help them continue the spiritual journey they have begun in Rooted.

15 minutes - Prayer Requests/Close Group in Prayer

- Before you close in prayer, review your church's mission statement and talk about how your purpose collectively as a group and as individuals can help fulfill that.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.

5 minutes - Closing

- Confirm the time and location for your serve experience. 100% participation is the goal.
- Assign someone to follow up with anyone who was absent from this session so they know to do the Spiritual Gifts Assessment.

TIPS ON LEADING A SERVE EXPERIENCE

Serving is less about fulfilling an obligation or even about helping other people. Serving is more about who God is shaping you to be. This comes from the biblical definition of poverty and the expression of fullness in the Gospel.

The Bible defines poverty in terms of Shalom shattered. There is brokenness between us, each other, creation and God. God's mission, or the Gospel, is the restoration of Shalom on the planet. In other words, we were not saved to stand around with other saved people talking about our saved experience, but instead we were restored to be restorers. We play a role in the restoration of the planet.

In order to do that, people need to wrestle with their stories. Most of us don't have a conscious awareness of the story that God has been writing in our own lives. He wants to use all the parts of our stories to help restore his Kingdom.

This is the serve experience. The desired outcome is not *doing*. Although important, it's not our main goal of the experience. We are after long-term impact and change in the individual serving. If that happens, he or she will serve more over his or her lifetime, rather than just hitting a one-time experience.

What is success for a serve experience?

An understanding of poverty: We are just as poor as the people we are going to serve.

A connection with our own stories: The events in our lives – good and bad – are all part of who we are. God blesses, redeems, and restores shalom in us.

A next step: Through hearing God, understanding our gifts and our brokenness, and "getting our hands dirty," we can define the next right step in fulfilling the purpose God has for us.

BEFORE YOU GO

At every serve experience, there are TWO primary leadership roles:

- 1) Spiritual Guide (most often this will be the Rooted Facilitator)
- 2) Host (most often this will be the ministry leader or staff)

Spiritual Guide

What do guides do? Guides help us understand what is happening. We trust them. They lead us through dangerous places. They give us context. They help us navigate and see things differently. As a guide:

- Help your group hear God's voice by removing the clutter. What are all the things that prevent people from hearing God's voice? Have some time before your

experience starts where you can walk through a short devotion or a passage of scripture to help clear the day away and focus on what you are about to do.

- Cast vision for the day and prepare their hearts for what they will experience.
 - Focus on BEING vs. DOING
 - Understanding biblical poverty
 - Connection with and discovery of their purpose through knowing their own story
- Shepherd your group through the day – who is connecting? Who isn't? How can you help them engage in the experience? The focus is on your group rather than on the serve experience. We recommend facilitators are not assigned a role so they can focus on caring for their group.
 - Avoid “grouping,” encourage our group to separate and go serve!
- Help them make a commitment to the next step. Helpful Questions:
 - What in your life is dead and not growing that God wants to restore back to life?
 - What are the fears and obstacles that would prevent you from connecting with a community like this?
 - What do you see? How is that a reflection of your heart?
 - Who has spiritually invested in you and who have you spiritually invested in?
 - How does your life reflect God's heart for others?

Debrief: Create space for your group to process their experience

- Before and after – plan to start earlier and end later than the designated time on the calendar
- No wasted time – use every moment to encourage discovery of their own story as well as connection and relationship with others
- Travel together if possible
- Questions to ask:
 - What did you see? What did you learn?
 - What are some of the emotions you experienced?
 - Where did you see God today?
 - Where did you hear his voice?
 - Facilitators will often have to help their group members “connect the dots” – based on what you know of the individual and the stories they've shared with the group, what insight does that give you about their purpose? Their gifts? Their passions?

Host

What role does a host have? Think about a time you hosted a party or a gathering at your home. As a host, we greet our guests, provide a place to put their belongings and most of the time we offer them a drink and a snack. We make sure they feel welcomed and we own the space we are providing for our guests.

As a ministry host we want to host Rooted groups in the same way. This is your ministry. Own it! If you are passionate about the ministry and what you are doing, your guests will be too. God has placed you as the ministry leader, something in your story called you to your specific ministry, and this is a great opportunity to be able to share a short version of your story to the groups that are coming to serve. It is so important to share your story and why you are in the ministry you are in – it can play a significant role in helping someone else connect with their story, their passion and ultimately their purpose. You are modeling this for others! As hosts we need to provide an orientation that includes the following:

- Cast vision for the ministry/God’s heart for this ministry
- Share our stories: Why was I called to this ministry? How did God call me here? How have I connected with my purpose?
- Delegate people to specific roles. Make sure people understand what the goal of the day is – what will they do while they are also building new relationships?
- As you see gaps or opportunities to support the Rooted facilitator, please do so!
 - Do people need to be assigned different roles? Are people hesitant about serving?
- Set the tone for the day by reminding people to ask these questions as they serve:
 - How will you be aware of God in this serve experience?
 - Why am I really serving? (Not just checking a box)
 - How might God use my story to build relationships with the people I meet today?
 - How can I get out of my way? (Not letting “discomfort” or “awkwardness” rob you of serving others)

Once the serve experience concludes, groups will need a place to debrief. Some groups may choose to go to lunch or dinner together to debrief. Other groups may want a place at your location to debrief. Please discuss this with the Rooted facilitator beforehand so everyone is clear on what is possible as some locations don’t afford the space for a group debrief. Most facilitators will want to lead the debrief with their group. However, as the host, you may want to confirm this with the facilitator to see if there is anything they need from you to lead the debrief.

DEVOTIONS

The following are two suggested devotions to help set the stage before serving. Pick one and use it to help focus group members' hearts and minds on what it means to serve others.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

We're about to read one of the most well-known parables recorded in the Bible. The parable of the Good Samaritan. During Jesus' time Jews did not associate with Samaritans. Jesus begins telling the story of a man who was walking down one of the most dangerous roads of that time. So dangerous in fact, it was nicknamed "bloody pass." It was a road known for ambushes and thievery. We aren't told whether the man was a Judean or a Samaritan. In fact, we aren't told anything about him. It's as if who he was or what he had done or not done was completely irrelevant. The man was ambushed and left for dead on the road. Read what happens next as three individuals pass by him on the road.

Enter the Story

Read Luke 10:29-37.

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Imagine you are part of this story. Who are you in the story? The beaten man? The Levi? The Priest? The Samaritan? Maybe you're the one asking Jesus who your neighbor is. Or perhaps you're a spectator observing from the sidelines.

What stands out to you in this story? Both the Priest and the Levite were people who were very much involved with church. They knew the law and the commands of scripture very well and yet they didn't stop. Maybe they were rushing off and didn't feel they had the time to stop. Perhaps they were afraid they would also be ambushed if they stopped and helped. So what's different about the Samaritan? What does he do differently?

Who needs you to stop for them today? Be aware of those who may need a listening ear or a friendly smile today. Don't think about what you need to do later today or what you're making for dinner tonight. Is God calling you to slow down and be aware of others needs today? Be present where you are and serve those around you with compassion, mercy and love.

Serve

Debrief

What did you see? What did you learn?

What are some of the emotions you experienced?

Where did you see God, today?

Where did you hear his voice?

Where did you see the characteristics of God on display?

Wrapping up the story

We don't know why the Samaritan stopped but he did. The passage says "He went to him." He literally stopped in his tracks and crossed the dangerous road to reach the man. He allowed himself to be interrupted. The Samaritan valued the man more than himself and his own needs, timelines, agenda, etc. He considered the beaten man before himself.

Who in your own life do you need to stop and care for today? Who needs you to slow down and cross the road for them? Who can you step off the curb and cross the street for in your community?

Your acts of service today through smiles, conversations, etc., are extensions of Jesus' great love for you and all you came in contact with.

SPEAK LORD

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-11

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle."

Observations about the passage:

- They were spiritual people
- Three out of four times they missed God's voice
- Samuel surrenders: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."
- The Lord says, "I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel."

Below are examples of two pages from the Rooted workbook, to be collected by facilitator after the serve experience.

SERVE EXPERIENCE

This week Rooted groups will be serving in our community. Foster kids, inner-city youth, undocumented children, pregnant & parenting teens, the elderly, the homeless, and others in our community are going to see the love of Christ through your service. Consider these points as you serve:

LIFE-CHANGE

Serving is not something we do to check off a box, but rather a lifestyle to adopt. Our goal and prayer is that all people going through Rooted have a life-changing serve experience – one that makes them want to keep serving, making it an integral part of their lives.

BEING VS. DOING

All of the serving opportunities are designed to be highly relational. The biblical definition of poverty is a lack of shalom or peace in our relationships: our relationships with God, ourselves, each other and the land. This levels the playing field. We ALL experience poverty. Because poverty isn't just a lack of material things, we can offer not just help, but more importantly, relationship. This means we talk to, interact with, and listen to the stories of those we're serving. Your listening ear may be the only one that person has had. It's why you're there.

DEBRIEF

Gather as a group at the end of your time of serving to pray and to debrief your experience. Use the "Speak Lord" cards provided to help process the experience. What is God speaking to you about your life? About serving? About possible next steps? Share with the group.

NEXT STEPS

Hopefully you'll be asking how you can serve regularly after this serving experience. Most of the serving opportunities will have next steps presented at the end of them.

FLEXIBILITY

Serving can get messy and unexpected things will happen. Please be flexible and remember we are there to serve, ready and willing to do whatever is asked of us that day. It's all part of the adventure!

WORKBOOK REVIEW

How Can I Make the Most of My Life? Part 1

The focus this week is on learning the heart of Jesus, how to desire that kind of heart and put that desire into action.

Day 1 Call to Serve

- Where have you seen the redemption of Jesus in your life? Where has He made something new?
- Where do you feel God calling you to do good things?

Day 2 Motive to Serve

- What surprises you about Jesus' heart?
- Who are people you know who have hearts like Jesus? What attracts you to them?
- What does it look like to serve out of your purpose rather than agenda?

Day 3 Breadth of Service

- What are ways you can become involved in the Great Commission?
- What are your thoughts about being “blessed to be a blessing” when it comes to sharing the Good News?

Day 4 Power to Serve

- Where in your life do you need the Holy Spirit's power?
- What would you like to accomplish with the power of the Holy Spirit?

Day 5 Wired to Serve

- What are some spiritual gifts you have been given? How will you use these gifts in your life?
- As you look at your life and the gifts God has given you, what sense do you have of the purpose He has for you and how He wants to use you?
- How do you see yourself contributing to the needs of six sectors of society through your gifts?