

Huddle Overview - John Study Week 2

Discipleship Definition:

Learning to love and follow Jesus—together—by His strength, in everyday life.

What are huddles at Foundations?

- Groups of 3-8 people (or 3-4 couples) that meet for one hour per week at a time and location of your choosing. Larger groups should plan for 75 minutes.
- Huddles last for 8 weeks. At the end of each 8-week session, you can stay with your group, add to your group or even change groups and topics.
- While gathering on Sunday is vital to spiritual growth, so is connecting with others to encourage one another, discussing what it means to follow Jesus and praying for one another. These practices are detailed in our **RHYTHMS** course (which is not necessary to take part in huddles, but highly recommended).

Our Mission at Foundations is to bring the extraordinary lifechanging message of Jesus Christ to a lost and broken world.

- Huddles are one way we prepare to do this very thing, and we can't do that unless our lives are being transformed by Him.
- Hence, the goal of every session is that you will grow more like Jesus in some small way.
- In order to do this, we will focus on God's Word, encourage one another and commit to praying for one another.
- Each week, there are *individual rhythms* we encourage that will help you "love and follow Jesus."
- Similarly, there are *corporate rhythms* that help us in our spiritual formation.
- Consistent practice of these rhythms is part of the holistic development of disciples, and this booklet is designed to touch on that development.

Rhythms Overview

The individual rhythms (for those who haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Prayer: Talking to God and listening to Him via His Word, His Spirit-Filled people and His creation. If you don't know how to pray, a good place to start is the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 5.

Abide in the Word: Reading the Bible and prayerfully asking God to show you who He is and what He wants for you. A good practice is to read with a pen in hand, and write your thoughts in a journal as He leads them.

Silence: Choosing to avoid speaking in order to listen to what He might want to say to us.

Solitude: Avoidance of interaction with others in order to be alone with Him. Silence enhances solitude. Have you intentionally gotten away to be alone (including technology/social media)?

Reflection (especially effective at the end of the day, maybe before sleep): Take some time in stillness to experience His presence. Tell God things you're thankful for. Make note of where you experienced Him today—or where you didn't. Note instances of loving your "neighbor" well—or failure to do so. Ask God for what He may want for you in the day tomorrow.

Other individual rhythms that will likely be practiced less frequently:

Fasting (food; if there's an area you are seeking specific guidance), giving joyfully (financially as an act of worship) and rest (setting aside time to enjoy your life and choosing to refrain from work).

The corporate rhythms (for those who haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Worship gathering: A time for our family to be together to participate corporately in the rhythms of worshipping together.

Participation in community: A time to engage in huddle, as well as other forms of being together as a church family (such as concerts, conferences/classes, events, etc.).

Lord's Supper: An opportunity for our family to reflect on the person and work of Jesus and to look forward in hope to His coming again.

Baptism: A one-time action of a declaration of faith in Christ. It is our hope that everyone be baptized, and that they also celebrate others who are being baptized.

Using your gifts to serve the Body: We have been given a gift to help the body of Christ come to maturity in faith, and we benefit by your presence.

Having a ministry of love for neighbors: We choose to exemplify the abundant life in order to fulfill our mission of bringing the extraordinary life of Jesus Christ to a lost and broken world.

Prayer, Day 1

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude, and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the following suggestion for ideas: Give thanks to God for the soul rest He offers through Jesus. Give thanks to Him for daily provisions like food, clothes, shelter, and friends. Thank Him that His presence allows you to endure and overcome hard circumstances this side of eternity. Ask Jesus to teach you more and more how to rest in His presence. Tell Him how excited you are for the perfect and pain-free rest that awaits us in heaven (k).

Time in the Word, Day 1, Read John 3:22-4:38

Background and Insights on the Reading:

John provides meaningful contrasts: Nicodemus was a man of power and prestige, well educated, and one who sought out Jesus of his own free will. The Samaritan woman is poor, outcast even among the outcast Samaritans, and not expecting to meet the Lord at all. Nicodemus needed to be reminded that his knowledge was incomplete. The Samaritan woman needed to be confronted with her sin, but also be lifted up and given value. These contrasts help demonstrate how the gospel of Jesus Christ is not only for all people, in all times, but that it will reach each person wherever they are, spiritually speaking (j).

In this scene, Jesus does something scandalous for a first-century Jewish rabbi: He enters into compassionate dialogue with a Samaritan woman with a questionable past. Jesus is always doing things like this: crossing boundaries to show that God's grace is not limited to a certain type of person. According to Jesus, salvation is for sinners. In other words, salvation is for everyone (h).

Jesus gives the woman three conditions for gaining "living water" (John 4:10): she needed to 1) know the free gift of eternal life that God gives; 2) know the identity of Jesus, the One who gives this on behalf of God; and 3) to ask Jesus for it (i.e., to believe in Him) (a).

Questions for Reflection:

- Jesus said "...but whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." What do Jesus' words in John 4:13-14 mean to you?
- Knowing Jesus...changes everything. Try to put yourself in the Samaritan woman's sandals. Despite her reputation and others' opinions about her, she very confidently shared her experiences with Jesus to the entire village, and convinced them all to come and meet Him. How can her boldness encourage you to speak out more about Jesus?

Additional resources - see appendix.

Prayer, Day 2

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude, and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for others as an example (Ephesians 1:15-22). You can use this to pray for yourself and for others. Tell God you love Him. Ask God for spiritual wisdom and that He would reveal Himself in ways you can know Him more. Pray that you know the hope of His calling you. Pray that you would know the hope - the complete assurance - of the inheritance of the saints. Ask God that you would know the power He gives to those who believe. Praise Him for being the God who is above all rule and authority and has the name above all other names. Thank Him for being the head of the church.

Time in the Word, Day 2, Read John 4:39-54

Background and Insights on the Reading:

John 4:46–54 records the second of Jesus' seven miracles told in the gospel of John. The primary point of this miracle is the importance of biblical "faith," which is really "trust." Jesus suggests that some people won't believe - won't actually "trust" in Christ - without seeing some miraculous event. Jesus then asks a miracle-seeker to act in trusting faith, by leaving without any proof that his request has been granted. As it turns out, the man has actual, trusting belief, and obeys. He finds his faith has already been rewarded on his way home. This also demonstrates the fact that God may sometimes answer our prayers long before we know He's done so.

There are two critically important applications of the healing of the official's son. First, real biblical faith requires "trust," not simply knowledge or hope. Christian faith is not blind faith, nor is it based on absolute proof. Rather, it's the choice to rely on what we do know, in spite of what we don't know. Second, this event proves that God may answer our prayers without making us aware. The man's son was healed at the very moment Jesus spoke, but he didn't find out until the next day. Simply because we haven't seen proof of God's work does not mean He's done nothing. He can work to answer our prayers in ways we won't find out about until much later (j).

Notice how the official's faith grew. First, he believed enough to ask Jesus to help his son. Second, he believed Jesus' assurance that his son would live, and acted on it. Third, he and his whole house believed in Jesus. Faith is a gift that grows as we use it (b).

Questions for Reflection:

- Was Jesus at the son's bedside? How then did Jesus heal the official's son?

- What do you think John is telling us about the power of Jesus' words...of His deity?

Prayer, Day 3

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude, and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray as Paul suggested in Philippians 4:6-7. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

Time in the Word, Day 3, Read John 5:1-30

Background and Insights on the Reading:

John 5:1–17 narrates Jesus' encounter with a man who had been an "invalid" (the Greek term for a "disabled" condition) for 38 years. This man had stationed himself near a pool thought to have healing powers. Jesus speaks a sentence to him, and he is instantly healed: "Jesus said to him, 'Get up, take up your bed, and walk.' And at once the man was healed". Thirty-eight years of disability are shed simply through the voice of Jesus. No matter the extent of sin or sickness in someone's life, Jesus can completely transform him or her through His power (h).

This amazing instance of healing is totally lost on these hard-hearted men (Pharisees). Every mention of Jesus, from the perspective of the religious authorities, relates to breaking the Sabbath, not to the miracle. In response, Jesus claimed to be equal with God (v. 18), to be the source of life (v. 26), and to judge sin (v. 27). These statements make it clear that Jesus was claiming to be divine (b). This also means Jesus is the exclusive way to come to God (John 3:36; 14:6). Those who reject Jesus are rejecting God (j).

Questions for Reflection:

- When you read about John's eyewitness accounts of Jesus giving a woman an entirely new life through her belief in Him, or Jesus healing a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, how can these true stories encourage you in your faith and hope, and enable you to persevere through your trials?

- What do you think it means (v. 25) that the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live?

Additional resources - see appendix.

Prayer, Day 4

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude, and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the ACTS method as an outline (for your own words). **Adoration** - (a time of worship), don't be afraid of "artistic expressions" here, or to use Psalms or hymns or other forms of praise. **Confession** - we all fall short and miss the mark. Confession of sin helps us in our relationship to God. **Thanksgiving** - simply tell God what you're thankful for. **Supplication** - ask God for the needs of the world, our country and leaders, our church, and anything and everything else. God wants to hear from you.

Time in the Word, Day 4, Read John 5:31-47

Background and Insights on the Reading:

Jesus defends his divine identity and ministry by appealing to Moses, saying, "If you (Pharisees) believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?" (John 5:46-47). This is one of the many places where Jesus argues that the Old Testament Scriptures are about him, that the Bible tells one big story about him. Jesus teaches us that the point of the Old Testament is to point to him - the Son of God who has come to take away the sins of the world (h).

Moses (i.e., the first five books of Scripture that he wrote) in whom they had set their hope for eternal life, frequently prophesied of the Messiah (Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Exodus 12:21; Numbers 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15; also, John 1:45; 3:14). Anyone who believed in the Scriptures Moses wrote (and therefore believed in the Lord) would have believed in Jesus as the Messiah (a).

Questions for Reflection:

- Read this section again and write the sentences where Jesus is saying: the Father has sent me...Father has given me...my Father...Scriptures testify about me, etc. What is Jesus saying to you through these statements?

- Why do you think Jesus says Moses would accuse the Pharisees?

Additional resources - see appendix.

Prayer, Day 5

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude, and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the breath method. Simply read through a Psalm and breathe in as you read the first line, and then exhale on the second. Take deep, long, slow breaths. Good examples are Psalm 46 and 47, but almost every Psalm can be done this way. Try to focus on the ones that focus on God and/or resonate with where you are at the moment.

Time in the Word, Day 5, Read John 6:1-21

Background and Insights on the Reading:

John 6:1-15 describes Jesus' feeding thousands of people - the fourth of the gospel of John's seven "signs" of Christ's divinity. This is to teach two primary lessons. First, the disciples were overly concerned with their own efforts. Ignoring the problem, worrying about money, and despairing over limited resources were all signs that their first thoughts were earthly, not heavenly. *When God gives us a challenge, He expects us to apply effort and resources to it (Colossians 3:23-25), but at the same time He wants us to proceed in faith, not in despair (Luke 10:2).* The second lesson is that of perspective. The disciples' money seemed impossibly limited; the boy's lunch seemed impossibly small. Yet, in the hands of Christ, what seemed small and insignificant became so abundant that the people were filled and there were many leftover pieces. In the same way, while our personal skills or our resources might seem inadequate, Christ can leverage those tiny assets into powerful results. *The power is His, and the results are His. We are only called to faithfully give Him what we have, even if it seems like it's not enough (j).*

Jesus Walks on Water. The command that appears most often in the Old Testament is the simple imperative "Do not be afraid," or "Fear not." The Old Testament is filled with God's call to not be afraid. This command reaches a climax with the arrival of the Son of God. In the midst of a storm, while walking on water, Jesus says to his frightened disciples, "It is I; do not be afraid" (h).

Questions for Reflection:

- Sometimes we may experience physical, spiritual or emotional challenges that feel out of control, like we're being tossed about in a small boat on a big lake. In the midst of these challenging circumstances, by entrusting our lives to Jesus for His safekeeping and having faith that He is with us, every step of the way, we receive encouragement in any storm. Think of a storm or trial you've recently faced or are facing. How can you draw upon this truth in your current situation?

Additional resources - see appendix.

Prayer, Day 6: A Time for Reflection

- Traditional time of Examen. This is a version of the five-step Daily Examen that St. Ignatius practiced.
- Become aware of God's presence. Breathe, and slow down. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and to bring to mind moments of your day to focus on.
- Review the day with gratitude. Walk through your day and give thanks for areas where you saw God "show up" and for His blessings.
- Pay attention to your emotions. The things you feel when you review often highlight areas where God wants you to focus and what he wants to teach you. Often this results in confession when you see your emotions out of line with walking in the Spirit.
- Choose one feature of the day and pray about it. Ask God to show you moments where you loved others well (or, conversely, He may bring to mind an area you didn't). Give thanks or ask forgiveness as warranted.
- Look toward tomorrow. Think through your day tomorrow and ask God what He may be calling you to do or be in the upcoming day.

Time in the Word, Day 6, Read John 6:22-71

Background and Insights on the Reading:

Verse 35, (I am the bread of life) contains the first of seven "I AM" statements of John's gospel. This is the same reference used by God Himself when speaking to Moses from the burning bush in Exodus 3:13-14. Here, the people have come to Jesus looking for another miracle, and for more free food. Instead, Jesus says they need to be seeking the "true bread from heaven" in order to obtain eternal life. Jesus has already clarified that this does not mean good works, but refers to belief in the One sent by God. Here, Jesus explicitly declares that He, Himself, is the One sent by God. Eternal life is found only through belief in Jesus Christ (John 14:6; John 3:36; Acts 4:12). (j).

In John's Gospel, Jesus repeatedly states that a relationship with God begins with God's initiative. To a crowd, Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. God must first call a person into relationship with Himself. We see this first in Genesis 12, when God calls Abram out of the crowd and into a relationship with Himself. Along with Jesus, the apostle Paul often highlights this truth (h). In other words, when someone chooses to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, he or she does so only in response to the urging of God's Holy Spirit. God does the urging; then we decide whether or not to believe. The first step is to accept that Jesus is who He claims to be. All spiritual development is built on this affirmation. Declare to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and embark on a life of belief that is satisfying to your Creator (b).

Questions for Reflection:

- What does it mean to you when Jesus says those who come to Him will never go hungry and those who believe in Him will never be thirsty (v. 35)?
- Jesus tells us God's will: "everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day". What does this promise mean to you personally?

Huddle Meeting:

General Check-In (10 minutes)

Emotional Check-In (10 minutes)

- Using the SACHET wheel, describe how you're doing emotionally right now. You may want to write down some of these to pray for your huddle during the week.



Rhythms Check-In (10 minutes)

- Describe your experience with the individual rhythms this week.
- Describe your experience with the corporate rhythms this week.
- How can the huddle encourage you this week in these areas? Or...How can you encourage the huddle this week in these areas?

Discussion for Growth (30 Minutes)

- Feel free to discuss any questions from the prior days' studies.
- John has told us of Jesus bringing the gospel to a respected Jewish teacher, then to an outcast Samaritan woman, and to an official working for the Roman government. This drives home the truth that the good news of God's grace is available for all types of people - to everyone in the world. Reflecting on these three different people, consider how they *each respond to Jesus*. What do their responses to Jesus teach you about how you should respond to the Son of God?
- Review John 5. Make a list of everything this passage teaches us about God the Father, about God the Son, and about the relationship God the Father and God the Son enjoy. What are your thoughts about what Jesus is saying?

Appendix

References

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