

## Huddle Overview - John Study Week 8

### **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. Talk to God and 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 about this week's study and ask the Holy Spirit for opportunities to learn and to apply it in your life. Thank God for His promise to keep and carry His people. Ask Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith, to continue changing you from the inside out, making you more like Him every day. Ask for opportunities to do hard things in His name and in His power – the same power that parted the Red Sea. Praise Him for allowing you to be a part of building His kingdom, just like those who have gone before you (f).

## Time in the Word, Day 1, Read John 20:1-9

### Background and Insights on the Reading:

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb before dawn. When she got there, the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. Mary immediately ran to Peter and John with the breathless announcement that someone had removed the Lord's body out of the tomb. Peter arrives at the tomb after John, but he is the first to walk in. This corresponds to Peter's typical enthusiasm (Matthew 14:28–29; 26:35; John 18:10). The faithfulness and devotion of women at the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord should be noticed. The disciples had forsaken the Lord and fled. The women stood by without regard for their personal safety (o).

Jesus had been buried quickly (John 19:42), but Nicodemus and Joseph still wrapped His body before closing the tomb (John 19:39–40). Mary Magdalene had reported that the body was gone. Yet the grave clothes are still there. That would have been confusing, to say the least. Why would someone unwrap the corpse before stealing it? The cloth designated for Jesus' face is placed off to the side, away from the other burial clothes (h). The detail about the handkerchief was added to show that the Lord's departure was orderly and unhurried. If someone had stolen the body, he would not have carefully folded the cloth! (o).

20:8. John entered the tomb and saw the orderly arrangement of the linen and the handkerchief. When it says *he saw and believed*, it means more than physical sight. It means he comprehended. Before him was the evidence of Christ's resurrection. It showed him what had happened, and he...believed (o). This is a sign of deliberate action - by Jesus. Seeing this cloth seems to have set John's mind to the idea that Jesus is truly alive (John 20:8). (h).

### Questions for Reflection:

If Jesus rose from the dead (and He did!), **He is alive!** Write down a few ways this historical fact can make a difference in your life this week? In what you do? In what you don't do? (n).

## 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. Talk to God and 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 a Psalm...they are really great prayers! Find one that you resonate with, and pray it aloud. Simply read through a Psalm, such as Psalm 23 or 51. Pray aloud, even if in a whisper, slowly and with concentration on the words. Try to be attentive to the thoughts that come to mind and discern if those may be something God is trying to tell you.

## Time in the Word, Day 2, Read John 20:10-18

### Background and Insights on the Reading:

Mary Magdalene was one of the women who stood nearby and watched Jesus die on a cross (John 19:25). She saw Him hastily buried (Matthew 27:60–61) and came before dawn on Sunday to give His body a more appropriate treatment (John 20:1). 20:11 The first two words are striking – **But Mary**. The other disciples went home, but Mary... Here again we have the love and devotion of a woman. She had been forgiven much; therefore, she loved much. She kept a lonely vigil outside the tomb, weeping because, as she thought, the body had been stolen, probably by the Lord's enemies (o).

When she investigates the tomb, she sees two angels where the body of Jesus had been lain. It is remarkable how these tremendous facts are stated quietly and without emotion (o). Most encounters with angels, in the Bible, strike immediate terror into those who see them (Luke 1:11–13; 2:9–10; Acts 10:3–4). John gives few details, but he makes no mention of Mary's fear. They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?' 'They have taken my Lord away,' she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' It's obvious from her answer that she still did not realize that Jesus had risen and was alive again. The angels know exactly why Mary is upset. They also know who is standing right behind her. She is sobbing (John 20:11–14), and the light is still dim. For the moment, her thoughts are locked to the idea that someone has taken Jesus' body. She supposed Him to be the gardener (John 19:40–42). (h).

Mary now heard a familiar voice calling her by name. There was no mistaking the fact – it was Jesus! She turned to him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni' which means "my Great Teacher." Mary had known Jesus personally as a man. She had seen miracles happen when He was bodily present. So, she concluded that if He was not with her in a visible way, then she could have no hope of blessing. Jesus' words in 20:17 correct her thinking, "Do not cling to me simply as a man in the flesh. I have not yet ascended to my Father." This means when He does return to heaven, the Holy Spirit will be sent down to earth. When He comes, He will reveal Jesus to Mary's heart in a way she has never known Him before (o). She obeyed His direction to go and tell the disciples, whom He now referred to as "My brethren."

### Questions for Reflection:

In His triumph, Jesus could have paraded through the streets of Jerusalem. He could have knocked on Pilate's door. He could have confronted the high priest. But the first person our resurrected Lord appears to is a woman without hope, a woman who grieves, a woman who desperately needs Him (p). Like Mary, *you* are a priority to Jesus. He cares deeply about *you*. What does this truth mean to you?

### 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. Talk to God and 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 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 3, Read John 20:19-22

#### Background and Insights on the Reading:

It was now Sunday evening. The disciples were assembled together. The doors were locked for fear of the Jews. Suddenly they saw Jesus standing in their midst, and they heard His voice saying, "Peace." It seems clear that Jesus entered the room without opening the doors. This was a miracle. It should be remembered that His resurrection body was a real body of flesh and bones. Yet He has the power to pass through barriers and otherwise act independently of natural laws. The words "Peace be with you" now have new meaning because Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. Those who are justified by faith have peace with God (o).

After announcing peace to them, He showed them the marks of His passion, by which peace had been obtained. They saw the marks left by the nails and the wound caused by the spear (o). Showing His crucifixion wounds reassures the men that this is the same Jesus, and the same body, which was executed on the cross. The same form that was in the grave is now alive. This meant His prophecies were fulfilled, exactly as He had said they would be (John 2:19–22; Mark 9:31; Luke 18:33). (h). Joy filled their hearts to realize it was truly the Lord. He had done as He said He would. He had risen from the dead. The risen Lord is the source of the Christian's joy (o).

During Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, He mentioned that part of His mission was to send others out (John 17:18). Here, He begins a more formal version of that process. The apostles will be given a partial indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22) (h), and told to continue teaching according to Jesus' example, doing God's will on earth (b). In His earlier teaching, Jesus pointed out that His message was God's message (John 14:10) and those who believed Him believed God (John 12:48–50). (h).

#### Questions for Reflection:

The Bible promises that we will be with Jesus for all eternity. Jesus says that He is going to come back for us and take us with Him to a place He has prepared for us (John 14:2-3). Like the disciples in today's verses, **we will see Jesus!** While we have direct access to Him through prayer and the Holy Spirit, think about the joy and excitement of seeing Him – face to face!

- What do you want to tell Jesus when you see Him face to face?
- What would happen if you looked for the face of Jesus in those around you? How would this change the way you respond to people in your life?

## 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. Talk to God and 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 on being a doer and not a hearer only: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Psalm 119:33-35.

## Time in the Word, Day 4, Read John 20:24-31

### Background and Insights on the Reading:

Earlier, Jesus' disciples were resistant to the idea that He had been resurrected. They had heard Him predict that event (John 2:19–22; Luke 18:33). They'd seen Him raise others from death (John 11:43–44). Eyewitnesses had seen Him alive (John 20:17–18; Luke 24:10–11; 23–24). Still, it wasn't until Jesus personally appeared to them that they accepted the truth (John 20:19–23).

Thomas was not present at Jesus' first appearance with the disciples. He had stubbornly refused to believe Jesus was resurrected, despite the eyewitness accounts of Jesus' closest followers. He must have visible, tangible proof of Jesus' resurrection; otherwise, he will not believe. That resulted in an outrageous demand: to put his fingers into Jesus' wounds before accepting that He was alive. When Thomas made his ultimatum, he probably assumed there could never be any scenario where that would even be possible. When Jesus appeared, again, He confronted Thomas with that challenge (John 20:26–27). As part of that, Jesus noted that Thomas was not merely failing to accept truth: he was actively disbelieving. There's a parallel in modern "skepticism," which often sets exorbitant demands for God to "prove" Himself...while ignoring available evidence and having no intent of believing anyway (John 5:39–40). (h).

The surest evidence is the Word of God. If God says a thing, we honor Him by believing in it; we dishonor Him by demanding additional evidence. We should believe simply because He said it and because He cannot lie or be mistaken (o).

### Questions for Reflection:

Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." He is saying we have all the proof we need in the words of the Bible and the testimony of believers.

- When you read a verse from the Bible about Jesus, does it seem as real as it would if Jesus was standing there telling it to you?
- How would it change your faith if you looked at and believed in Scripture the way Jesus encourages and teaches?

## **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. Talk to God and 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 about this week's study using a prayer from Psalm 25:4-7. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.

## **Time in the Word, Day 5, Read John 21:1-14**

### Background and Insights on the Reading:

Jesus told His disciples to wait for Him in Galilee (Matthew 28:9–10). They obeyed (John 21:1–2). This was the third time mentioned by John that Jesus appeared to His disciples. That there were other times is clear from the other gospels (o). This latest meeting (John 21:9–12) has a more casual, friendly feel.

Peter decided to go fishing on the lake, and the others (Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two other disciples whose names we do not know) decided to go with him (o). They ended a night of fishing without any success. As the dawn breaks, the men hear a man standing on shore asking about their catch, telling them to cast on the right side of the boat (John 21:4–6). The result is an enormous haul: so big it can't be pulled on board. John, (as he often does, refers to himself indirectly as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"), said "It is the Lord!" Peter's reaction is typically dramatic. He hastily throws on his outer clothes and jumps into the water so he can swim to shore. The others will follow, as they can, hauling the overloaded net (John 21:8). (h).

The invitation to breakfast is heard, and the disciples gather around the fire of coals to partake of the good things the Lord had provided. Peter must have had his own thoughts as he saw the fire of coals. Was he reminded of the fire at which he warmed himself when he denied Jesus? The disciples must have felt a strange sense of awe and solemnity in the presence of the Lord. There He stood in His resurrection body. There were many questions they would like to have asked Him. They knew He was the Lord - even if they felt a certain sense of mystery shrouded His Person (o). The simple act of sharing a meal, especially in the ancient world, represents friendship and trust. After breakfast, Jesus will address an important issue: Peter's embarrassing denial of Christ (John 13:36–38; 18:25–27). (h).

### Questions for Reflection:

- Have you ever experienced Jesus in the midst of a desperate situation – a difficult or dark season that you weren't sure you would ever get through? Peter sure did.
- How can the real-life stories from the Bible help encourage you in tough times like these?

## **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 21:15-25**

### Background and Insights on the Reading:

In this beach scene, Jesus led Peter through an experience that would remove the cloud of his denial. Peter had disowned Jesus three times. Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. When Peter answered yes, Jesus told him to feed His sheep. It is one thing to say you love Jesus, but the real test is willingness to serve Him. Peter had repented, and here Jesus was asking him to commit his life. Peter's life had changed back when he realized who Jesus was. His occupation changed from fisherman to evangelist; his identity changed from impetuous to "rock"; and his relationship to Jesus changed – he was forgiven, and he finally understood the significance of Jesus' words about His death and resurrection (b).

Three times, Peter denied Jesus. Three times, Jesus will make Peter confess His faith. Jesus has already repeated His question: "do you love Me?" twice, and now asks for a third time. This last question is even more piercing. In the first two questions, Jesus' reference to love used the Greek term *agapaō*. Both of Peter's answers used the closely related term *phileō*. Now, Jesus uses the exact same word as Peter. For this third question, Jesus is asking Peter "do you [*phileō*] me," after Peter has just said, twice, "I [*phileō*] you." The implication is clear: Peter has said this very thing, twice, using those exact words, but Jesus wants to hear it a third time. Peter's response is to be "grieved," the same term used to describe Jesus' emotion in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37). He understands that Jesus is not asking because He does not know; He is asking to prove a point. Three denials are being countered with three affirmations. Peter's betrayal of his own promises is being challenged. Jesus will not leave Peter in sorrow, however. This is a moment of repentance and restoration. His next words predict that Peter's reaffirmed faith (John 21:19) will be permanent (h).

### Questions for Reflection:

- Jesus seems to go to great lengths to restore Peter (i.e., three questions of devotion to parallel his three prior denials; a charcoal fire to perhaps recall the smells of that night). Why do you think He did that? What lessons are there for you? (n).

## 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.
- What is something you learned about Jesus in this section? How would you talk this over with Jesus? Try writing your response down as a prayer to Him.
- What do you believe God wants you to do in response to this week's study?
- As you think back on your study of the Gospel of John, how has your understanding of Jesus as the Son of God deepened? How has your faith been strengthened? (n).

## Appendix

### References

- a. The Moody Bible Commentary, Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, General Editors, Moody Publishers, Chicago, Illinois, 2014
- b. Life Application Study Bible, NIV, Tyndale House Publishers Inc. Wheaton, Illinois and Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2005
- c. studyandobey.com, Copyright 2012-2021
- d. Bible Gateway app. Version 49
- e. The MacArthur Study Bible, Copyright 1997 by Thomas Nelson Inc. App Version 2.0.9
- f. The Gospel Coalition, thegospelcoalition.org, Copyright 2021
- g. Gty.org, Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time, ©2021 Grace to You
- h. Bibleref.com, Copyright 2002-2021, Got Questions Ministries
- i. Jesus The God Who Knows Your Name, Max Lucado, Nelson Books, ©2020
- j. Got Questions Ministries, gotquestions.org, Copyright 2002-2022
- k. Biblehub.org, Copyright 2004-2021
- l. Intouch.org, Copyright 2022 in Touch Ministries
- m. Blueletterbible.org, Copyright 2022 Blue Letter Bible
- n. John – Jesus the Word, the Messiah, the Son of God, Copyright 2007, John MacArthur
- o. Believer's Bible Commentary, Second Edition, Copyright 2016, Thomas Nelson
- p. Moments with the Savior, Copyright 1998, Ken Gire, Zondervan