

IN A RELATIONSHIP

A LESSON SERIES ON BEING TOGETHER.

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Lesson 1

GROWING TOGETHER

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42-47)

WELCOME

Ask each of your members to recite the memory verse for the week.

WORSHIP

God is pleased when his children are living in peaceful and healthy relationship with one another. Ask everyone to tell the person to their right something that they appreciate about him/her. Lead the group in prayer afterwards.

WORD

HOOK: Do you think regularly attending church or a worship service is important? Explain your answer.

BOOK: Read Acts 2:42-47.

This passage describes the beauty of the early church. Early Christians made sure to gather in prayer, worship and breaking of the bread. Considering the danger of persecution during their time, why didn't they give up meeting together? If you've ever thought attending a church isn't that important as long as you are already in Christ or that you can manage to grow spiritually without the church's help, may the Holy Spirit use this topic to convict you and show you the truth.

1. To Welcome and Accept

“Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles” (Acts 2:43)

The church is supposed to be a safe place for everyone. It should be a place where you and I can be honest with ourselves without fear of being judged. It should be a place we can consider home. It is a place where we can find help, support and unconditional love. Sadly, this is not what we think of the church nowadays.

We come to church wearing our saintly masks trying to act strong while deep inside there might be a big wound that needs to be addressed. We avoid our pastors, mentors and leaders for fear of rejection. We try to push through on our own and find ourselves exhausted to the point of giving up. On

the other hand, leaders sometimes fail to act in grace while trying to take control of everything. We are all flawed individuals being made perfect by grace. We must learn to accept and set aside each other's differences because God never intended us to be the same. What divides us cannot stand to what unites us – Jesus!

Let it start in you. Stop hating. Stop labeling people. Do not discriminate. We are all a work in progress. Be an instrument of unity and reconciliation. Offer a safe place for someone.

2. The Willingness to Help

“They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:45-46)

One of the best things about the early church is their exceptional devotion to help one another that they even sold their own possessions for the common use of the church. No one is lacking because they are so intentional in attending to each other's needs.

We, as a church should be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. Jesus has always been passionate about helping the poor, the orphan and the widow. But how can we reach out and help those who are outside if we can't even help those who are in the church? As we learn to love one another deeply and genuinely as a family, helping and giving becomes a natural

thing. It all starts with our willingness. Be willing to help someone every chance you get.

3. They Worship and Witness Miracles

“... praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47)

The main reason why the early Christians gather is to worship. They listen to the apostles' teachings, they celebrate the Lord's goodness in their lives and they remember Jesus' sacrifice through the breaking of bread. Being together does not only mean being at the same place at the same time; it is more about having the same heart and working towards a common goal. If we are so focused on worshipping God, we should not have much time for arguments. If we are so focused on loving one another, we should have no time to hate.

If we want to achieve spiritual growth, we must do it together. As no man is an island, no Christian will last this journey alone. Let's set aside our differences and move towards making a difference! If we want TO GET THERE we need to be TOGETHER. We are stronger when we're together!

“Some people have given up the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer” (Hebrews 10:25)

LOOK: What are the factors that stop you from coming to church? We may have been hurt by a church mate one way or another. How did you manage to overcome? Or if you haven't forgiven the person, how do you plan to settle this matter?

TOOK: What changes (in perspective, attitude, personality, etc.) must you apply to promote togetherness in the church?

WORKS

Take note of your members' answers from **TOOK**. Follow up on them throughout the week and encourage them in the process. Close the group meeting in prayer.

(This lesson is based from Pastor Roy de Leon's sermon at Generation Congregation service on 29 July 2018.)

Lesson 2

GODLY RELATIONSHIP GOALS

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Timothy 6:6-8)

WELCOME: “What is Your Status?”

(Before the meeting, prepare strips of paper in 5 different colors: green, white, black, red and pink.) Instruct the members of the group to pick one paper according to their “status”:

- Single – white
- Single and ready – green
- Single and “back off!” – black
- In a relationship – red
- Married – pink

Ask each member:

- For singles: Why are you single? (Leave this question out if the member is a minor or still a student)
- For those in a relationship: Whom are you in a relationship with, and since when? Care to introduce him/her to the group some time? (Leave this out if the group members already know the answer and the girlfriend/boyfriend).

- For married couples: Since when have you been married? What is your secret to a lasting marriage?

Regardless of our relationship status, we are never alone if we are in the Lord. He invites us to be in a relationship with Him.

WORSHIP

Ask the group if they are already “in a relationship” with the Lord. Lead the group into a thanksgiving atmosphere as they answer. For those who answer “Yes”, ask them when they accepted the Lord as Savior. For those who answer “Not yet” or “What’s that?” tell them to keep listening to the topic for today.

WORD

HOOK: In two sentences, what is your relationship goal this year?

BOOK: Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8.

In finding or starting new relationships, it’s not just about finding the right person; it is first and foremost being the right person for someone. When you become the right person, you attract the right one.

As you live a godly life, you are setting yourself up for a godly relationship. Singleness is not a curse, and waiting is a gift.

We are never single when we are in a relationship with the Lord.

“For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5)

We should strive for godly relationship goals, because it is worth the wait. What is a godly relationship, by the way?

1. A Godly Relationship is Christ-centered

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33)

This means that the Lord is number one not just in your life but in your partner’s. This is possible with a person that has a similar desire for God as yours. In this way, you can achieve a relationship where you can encourage one another in pursuing God.

A godly relationship is NOT having what we call the “Messianic complex”. Don’t enter into a romantic relationship wishing your partner would change. Be with someone seeing that they have been changed by God. Only God can change us.

Pursuing your lover more than God is idolatry. Never allow any human being to take the place of God in your life. A godly relationship should help build the one you have with Jesus, not replace it. They have to love the Lord more than they love you.

Your relationship with Christ does NOT depend on the hands of your partner.

Godly relationship goals mean: praying together, worshipping together, serving together, reading the Word together, living for Jesus together.

2. A Godly Relationship Fights for Purity

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure” (Hebrews 13:4)

Being pure not only means being physically pure, but spiritually and emotionally pure. A wise move is to save even the little things for marriage, like travelling together, seeing how your partner looks (and smells) in the morning, kissing, and doing the special things couples do. When the right time comes, you will say, “I’m so glad we waited.”

GenCon has an *Antay-Kiss* campaign. In English, it literally translates *Wait Kiss*. It is a program for high school and college students, aiming to encourage young people to abstain from physical intimacy. Bigger temptations related purity starts with a simple kiss. God wants us to grow in Him first so we can have the godly marriage He wants for us.

3. A Godly Relationship is a Partnership of Two Forgivers

*“Bear with each other and **forgive one another** if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive** as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13)*

“In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26)

Having arguments in a relationship is inevitable, but it’s how you handle the argument that matters. Do it God’s way: be gentle, and forgive.

“... it (love) keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5)

A godly partner is someone who accepts you and will not use your past against you.

4. A Godly Relationship Serves in and as a Ministry

Your relationship serves as your ministry to others. Be an inspiration and good example, and let them see Jesus in your relationship. The purpose of a godly relationship is to bring God’s kingdom together. Never be a weakness to one another, and never be a weakness to the ministry.

A godly relationship lasts forever.

“Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mark 10:9)

When God is involved, a relationship lasts forever. A relationship works best when Jesus is the heart of it.

LOOK: Are you living out these qualities right now, whatever your status is? If not, in what area do you still need help?

TOOK: What step will you make now to prepare yourself or to maintain a godly relationship?

If the member still has not accepted Christ as Savior, ask them: *The Lord wants to be “in a relationship” with you, meaning He will be the Lord of your life, and you will surrender every aspect of Your life to Him, because He wants the best for you. Will you accept His invitation?* If they say yes, lead them into a prayer of acceptance.

WORKS

Lead the group into praying for their struggles, and for strength in pursuing a godly relationship. Offer to set an accountability time for those who want to open up further about their struggles, and listen to them attentively.

(This lesson is based from Rev. Jordan Escusa’s sermon at Generation Congregation service on 19 February 2018).

Lesson 3

QUALITIES OF A TRUE SERVANT

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:43-45)

WELCOME: “Never Have I Ever”

[Before the meeting, prepare several red and blue popsicle sticks. Create a list of *good deeds* that a typical person does (e.g. helped an old woman cross the street, gave my seat to an elderly or a pregnant woman, or picked a trash that is not mine and threw it in the bin). *Write as many as you can think.*] During the meeting, give each person one blue and one red popsicle stick. Read the items one by one. Tell your members to raise blue if they the already done the item even once and red if they haven't.

WORSHIP

Lead the group in prayer.

WORD

HOOK: Can you name *great* people? What was your criteria for considering them great?

BOOK: Mark 10:35-45

In prior verses, Jesus has predicted his death the third time. While He was thinking of his upcoming ordeal, his disciples were having different concerns of their own. James and John, who are among the first disciples that Jesus called, approached their Teacher and made a request that made the other disciples indignant. *“Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory,”* said the two. Most of us would’ve reacted the same way as the other disciples. What an outrageous request! So Jesus told them, *“You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”*. Simply put, Jesus is asking them if they can do what He is doing and is about to do. Knowing their hearts and the other disciples’, Jesus called them together and taught them a great lesson which is another oxymoron in the Bible. *“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”*

We cannot blame James and John. They might have thought they deserve the position. They were among the first disciples. Jesus brought them with him everywhere He went. He even chose them to be with Him during the Transfiguration. They’ve been good students. They followed Him since day one and left everything for his cause. And human as we are, we too like them tend to look for recognition; a reward, for our efforts and accomplishments. We seek greatness, we seek promotion, that’s why we work hard.

But then Jesus does not want us to go astray. He knows that our success and accomplishments can make us greedy. He does not want followers who are so full of themselves. Jesus is more concerned about our character than our accomplishments. He cares more about how we do things than the outcome. If we really want to be great in the eyes of God, we should learn from Jesus who modeled a life of being a servant.

What are the qualities of a true servant?

1. A true servant is not self-promoting (v.35)

Are you the type of person who wants to talk about what you have done for someone or for the ministry? Are you somehow, like James and John, imposing on what kind of reward you deserve?

There is nothing wrong with recognition but when it has become your primary motive for your actions, then you are not becoming a true servant. *“So when you give to the needy, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be praised by men. Truly I tell you, they already have their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:2-4) Jesus often told people not to tell about the miracles He has performed because he knows they will want to make him their king. He never brags about the things he does and always gives the credit to the Father.

2. A true servant is Spirit-led (v.40)

Do you do things because you felt the Spirit's leading or just because you wanted to do it? Do you often do things first before praying about it?

John 5:9 says, "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." Jesus was always seeking his Father's will. He never acted on his own. Everything he does is pleasing to God. As we mature in life, in faith or in the ministry, we somehow become self-reliant thinking we know enough. Experience may be a good teacher, but nothing beats the favor and power that comes from the Spirit. A true servant remains obedient to his Master no matter how experienced he or she has become.

3. A true servant seeks to serve (v.43)

Since the start of Jesus' ministry, he has been from one place to another. He didn't stay in the same town for too long. He always seeks the needy, the sick, the blind, the paralyzed. He intentionally makes opportunities to serve others especially those around him. He even washed his disciples' dirty feet! A true servant wakes up every morning thinking "Whom can I help today?". A true servant pays attention to the need of others and finds ways to be of help.

4. A true servant is willing to lay down his life for others (v.45)

Jesus often calls us to go the extra mile. He is not content with giving temporary satisfaction through fish and bread and gave us eternal salvation through his sacrifice on the cross. This might be the hardest calling of a servant but Jesus is not requiring us to literally die for others, he's already done that. What He wants is for us to treasure others as much as we treasure our own lives. *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another"* (John 13:34).

LOOK: Among the 4 qualities mentioned, which one is your current strength? Where do you struggle the most?

TOOK: What specific actions must you do to apply this message in your life?

WORKS

Lead the group into praying for their struggles in pursuing a true servant's life. Offer to set an accountability time for those who want to open up further about their struggles, and listen to them attentively.

Lesson 4

WORDS

“The tongue has the power of life and death” (Proverbs 18:21)

WELCOME: “Taboo”

The objective of the game is for a player to have their partners guess the word on the player's card without using the word itself or five additional words listed on the card.

Ask a volunteer who will make the other players guess the given word. He/She may use any word related to the item but not the words given in the card (e.g. **INTERNET:** Google, Browsing, Facebook, Connect, Yahoo).

INTERNET COMPUTER WEB SURF NET TECHNOLOGY	JACKET COAT WARM CLOTHES SLEEVES ZIPPER	SHOWER RAIN CLEAN WATER EVERY DAY BATH	WIND BLOW AUTUMN INVISIBLE TREES KITE
ICE CREAM COLD SUMMER SWEET SNACK CONE	FOREIGNER TEACHER DIFFERENT OUTSIDE COUNTRY TRAVEL	CHURCH SING BUILDING CROSS GOD SPEAKER	POLICE UNIFORM SAFETY PEACE PROTECT SIREN

WORSHIP

Lead the group in prayer. The group may also listen to the song “All of the Words” by Kutless.

WORD

HOOK: What is the most painful thing someone had ever told you? How did it affect you?

BOOK: Words are powerful. When God created the world, He used his word like a carpenter uses his hammer. Words can either make us or break us. We must be careful in our speech and be mindful of how it may affect the receiver.

1. Words Can Bring Harm

“The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating. The mouth of foolish are their undoing, and their lips are a snare to their very lives” (Proverbs 18:6-7)

“Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is one who gives false testimony against a neighbor” (Proverbs 25:18)

“A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin” (Proverbs 26:28)

There are a lot of verses in the Bible that warn us about the improper use of words. Nowadays, people have become so bold in expressing their opinion about an issue, a belief, and especially about someone. There is nothing wrong with being honest, but we must still consider every word that comes out of our mouth. If all we do is say negative things about something or someone, we need to assess ourselves and see if there is an inner problem that needs be resolved.

2. Words Can Bring Good

“Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone” (Titus 3:1-2)

“Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body” (Proverbs 16:24)

Most of us would agree that words of encouragement boost our morale. We love to hear our parents’ affirmation or read a friends’ touching note. Sad thing is, we have become so quick to criticize and too slow to appreciate someone. If we can’t say anything good, it is better to not say anything at all. When was the last time you encouraged someone? When was the last time you comforted someone by your words? Let us not withhold words that may bring healing to someone every day.

3. God’s Words Bring Out the Best

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12)

a. It directs us

“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). It is said that B-I-B-L-E stands for Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. Our own knowledge may fail us but we have the Bible for instruction and guidance. Whenever we need to make decisions, let us anchor it upon God’s word.

b. It rebukes us

God’s word never fails to show us the truth. It reveals the wickedness of our hearts and makes us aware of our sins. There might be things we are doing before that we didn’t know displeases God, but when we started reading his word we have become more aware of our mistakes.

c. It cleans us

Jesus said, *“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.” (John 15:3).* The Word cleanses us from our untruths. It asks us to unlearn what wrongs we have previously believed.

d. It encourages us

The Bible is full of God’s promises that will surely get us through the toughest of times. You will never go wrong to consult your Bible whenever you are facing difficulty or when you are in a depressing situation.

LOOK: Are you more of a faultfinder or an encourager?
Share to the group your learnings in today's topic.

TOOK: How will you use words to bring healing or encouragement to someone this week?

Take note of your members answers and make sure to follow them up throughout the week.

WORKS

List down 5 people you will encourage this week. Close in prayer.

(This lesson is based from Rev. Jordan Escusa's sermon at Generation Congregation service on 04 March 2018).