

SESSION TWO

CONNECT



It may seem obvious, but if we never connect and spend time with people who are far from God, it's going to be impossible to introduce them to Jesus. Jesus set an example for us by hanging around with people who needed Him – people who needed to be healed, not just physically but spiritually.

Jesus often did this around a meal, but He also did it as He walked around throughout His day. He didn't wait for people to come to Him - He went to them. He was always connecting with people, engaging them in conversation. He was great at listening, and He was always asking questions.

Many of us tend to keep our social and relational circles limited to people who act and believe just as we do. Or we think that connecting with people who aren't Christians means preaching at them, not just hanging out with them.

Jesus calls His followers not only to believe in Him, but to live like Him. That often begins with choosing to connect with people who are far from God.



MEMORY VERSE

“While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”



Matthew 9:10-13



HANGING OUT

Open your group with prayer. Be willing to be real and honest. Remind the group to respect confidentiality; commit to keeping prayer requests and current needs within the group.

1. During the OVERVIEW session, Pastor Tim challenged us to be salt and light. As you went throughout your week, how were you able to **shake**, and where were you able to **shine**?
2. Today's teaching takes place in a health club, a great place to connect with people. Where's your favorite place to hang out with friends?
3. Tell about a time when you were welcomed to a gathering or meal as an newcomer. What happened and how did it make you feel?



WATCH AND LEARN



Watch the DVD teaching for this session, using this **Teaching Notes** section to fill in the blanks, and record key thoughts, questions, and statements you want to remember or look into further.

CONNECT

Jesus was sent on a _____.

Your mission is _____.

If the body's not moving, it's not _____.

Jesus said His mission was to _____ and _____ the lost.

When you go out to your Jerusalem to be God with meat, just be _____.

FIGURING IT OUT



*If time is short, the questions marked with an * should be given priority.*

1. What was your most intense take-away from the stories and teaching we just heard? Why is it important that we hang out with people who are not followers of Jesus?

2. * What are some of your non-church activities (such as sports, work, volunteering at your child's school, etc.) where you could connect with people who aren't Christians? Since you're already in those places, what can you do to initiate relationships with others?

3. * Gene Appel talked about the importance of good questions. These are not "pickup lines" or interrogations. They are not yes/no questions. In your own life, what kinds of questions draw you into conversation?

FIGURING IT OUT

4. * **Read Matthew 9:10-13.** Eating with someone is a way of demonstrating how much you value a person. Why was it so shocking to people when they saw who Jesus was sharing a meal with?

5. What barriers get in the way of you inviting your neighbors into your home for a simple meal and conversation?





LIVING IT OUT

IN THIS SECTION, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY THE WISDOM YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE TEACHING AND BIBLE STUDY. THEN THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

Pastor Tim intentionally works out at a health club so that he can connect with people who are far from God. What places would you consider visiting in order to connect with people who need to meet Jesus?

Mindy Caliguire was intentional about having meals and snacks in her home for her son's friends who were far from God. What can you do this week to create a safe and welcoming environment in your home in order to connect with people in your life?



Pastor Tim gave us a LIVING IT OUT challenge this week. He asked, "Who is in your Jerusalem right now that you can connect with, and what are you going to do about it?"

Non-Christians don't just hear our words, they watch how we live. Take some time this week to identify behaviors in your life that might be stumbling blocks that prevent others from being open to hearing about Jesus. Make a commitment to ask God to help you remove any behaviors that don't align with the faith you profess.

CLOSE IN PRAYER



For more
Life on Mission resources, visit
www.lifeonmission.com.

If you feel God nudging you to go deeper, take some time between now and our next meeting to dig into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own, jotting your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. A great way to gain insight on a passage is to read it in several different translations. You may want to use a Bible app or website to compare translations.

DIGGING DEEPER

READ MATTHEW 9:1–13.

While many of us first met Jesus in a religious setting, sooner or later we have to learn that Jesus is Lord over all of life. If He's only the Master when we're in church or with other religious people, then He's not really the Master.

This passage invites us to think about how we have followed Jesus and what we have done to bring others along.

1. If Matthew was one of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' miracle with the paralyzed man, how do you think it set him up for the invitation to follow?

2. Matthew invited all his friends over for a life-changing party. Who showed up and what did they experience?

DIGGING DEEPER

AS WE READ MATTHEW 9, it's interesting to note that Matthew invited friends who were far from God to come and have dinner with Jesus. In the ancient Middle East, sharing a meal was particularly significant. It showed acceptance and friendship on a deeper level than a shared meal in our culture does today. Jesus fellowshiped with "sinners" before they ever thought about repentance or lifestyle change. It's likely that many of them ended up believing in Him, but His acceptance of them wasn't contingent upon that. He loves sinners unconditionally, and asks us to do the same.

3. Why do you think Jesus was so "at home" with these sinners?

4. What was Jesus expecting us to do in response to His words that night: "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13).

5. What is one way you have "gone and learned"?





DAILY QUIET TIME

Each day, read the daily verses and give prayerful consideration to what you learn about God, His Spirit, and His place in your life. Then record your thoughts, insights, or prayers on the lines below each verse.

DAY 1: "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." (Romans 12:13-16)

How much of this passage would you say reflects your lifestyle? What does this list have to do with connecting with others?

DAY 2: "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:13)

What have you done since the small group session to "go and learn" what Jesus said?

DAY 3: "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:1-2)

What are some ways you can "show hospitality to strangers"?

DAY 4: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

We often talk about people being spiritual "seekers," but who does this verse say is doing the seeking? What does that imply for us as His followers (those who want to live as He did)?

DAY 5: "Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:15-16)

What does it mean to let your light shine? What is one way you can do that? How would it help you connect with others?

