

**SESSION 1**

# SMALL GROUP INTRO

Who influences you? Who in your life has impacted who you are?

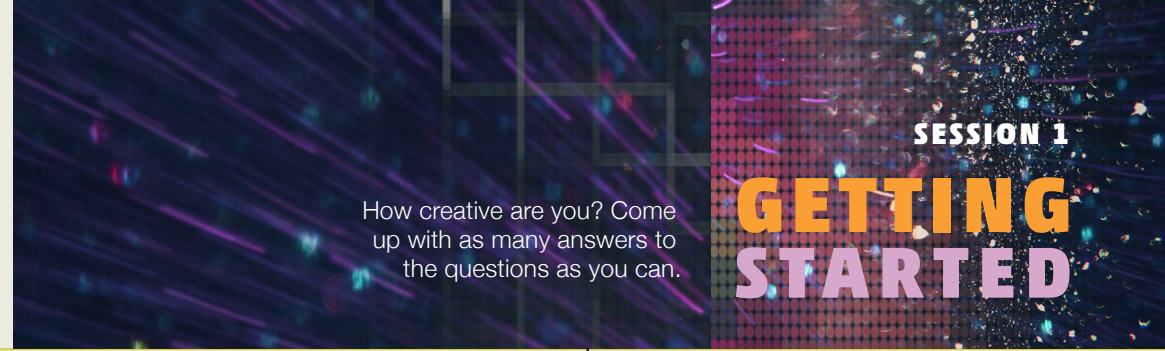
Our parents, grandparents, or guardians often influence us. Their personalities or habits shape our personalities or habits.

Our friends influence us. Without even knowing it sometimes, we talk alike, dress alike, enjoy the same music; the list goes on and on.

In some cases, maybe there's someone who you don't even know who has influenced you. Maybe something an author or preacher or some other significant person said or did has impacted your life.

The truth is that you are shaped by many outside forces. Some positively, some negatively.

What influences you? And how is your life changed as a result? You're about to find out.



**SESSION 1**

# GETTING STARTED

How creative are you? Come up with as many answers to the questions as you can.

**QUESTION 1:**

Answers will vary.

**QUESTION 2:**

Answers will vary.

**QUESTION 3:**

Answers will vary.

**QUESTION 4:**

Answers will vary.

## SESSION 1

# DIGGING IN

Read Acts 4:1-13 and write down what you think is interesting or important about the story.

- **OK, what details or important points jumped out at you?**
  - Allow students to share. Engage in discussion as you go, asking students, “Why do you think that is important?” or “Why did that stand out?” or offering your thoughts or observations as you go. (Continue with the rest of the questions below, omitting any that you’ve already covered based on your students’ responses.)
- **What was the religious leaders’ response to Peter and John? Why?**
  - Answer: They were “greatly annoyed” that Peter and John were “teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”
- **Why did this fact annoy them? Why did they care what Peter and John were preaching?**
  - Answer: Remember, these are the people who had put Jesus to death on the cross. They accused Jesus of lying about who He was and what His mission was. These folks had every reason not to want Peter and John telling the truth about Jesus’ identity and His resurrection.
- **Describe in your own words the interaction between Peter and John and the religious leaders in verses. What do you think the religious leaders expected from Peter and John?**
  - Answers will vary. While we don’t know for sure, it’s reasonable to think that maybe they thought Peter and John would be intimidated. After all, it was quite the display of authority.
- **How did Peter and John respond?**
  - Answer: BOLDLY! Filled with the Spirit, Peter dropped a truth-bomb on this collection of religious leaders. His response was true, powerful, and bold.
- **Verse 13 is the real heart of why we’re studying this narrative. What does it say?**
  - Answer: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”
- **Peter was a fisherman before he encountered Jesus. John was almost surely a teenager. And yet, they were proving to live powerful lives of influence, lives that mattered! What was the reason for this? What was the explanation for their boldness?**
  - Answer: They had been with Jesus!

Read the following verses and discuss them with your group.

**“[1] BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO WALKS NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE WICKED, NOR STANDS IN THE WAY OF SINNERS, NOR SITS IN THE SEAT OF SCOFFERS; [2] BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND ON HIS LAW HE MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT.” - PSALM 1:1-2**

1. The psalmist is talking about living our lives in such a way as to either live a blessed life or not. He first lists three things that lead to a life that DOESN'T experience God's blessing. What are those three ways?

Answer: “Walking in the counsel of the wicked” or “standing in the way of sinners” ( both of these simply mean to live according to the advice of those who don't follow God), and “sit[ting] in the seat of scoffers” (a scoffer was someone who literally does not believe in God, someone who “laughs” at the thought of God and His ways).

2. He follows this up in verse 2 with a definition of HOW to live a life blessed by God. What is the key to living a life that experiences the goodness of God?

Answer: We must “delight” in God's Word. We must think about it always.

**“[16] ALL SCRIPTURE IS BREATHED OUT BY GOD AND PROFITABLE FOR TEACHING, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, AND FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, [17] THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE, EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.” - 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**

1. First, what does Paul say about the Bible in verse 16?

Answer: That all of the Bible is “breathed out” by God. In other words, it's “God inspired.”

2. What does this mean for how we view the Bible?

Answer: It's authoritative. It's God's Word, not humans. We can 100% trust that it is true, and right, and fully capable to steer our lives by.

3. But check out what else it says. What does verse 17 mean?

Answer: That the Bible is the means by which we are prepared to do the work God has for us to do.

**SESSION 1**

# WRAPPING UP

*How are you doing when it comes to spending time in God's Word? Use the questions below to help you evaluate this aspect of your faith.*

1. How often each week do you read your Bible?

NEVER MOST DAYS EACH DAY

2. How much influence does the Bible have on your life?

NOT MUCH SOME LOTS

3. Does meeting God in the Bible help you feel more connected to Him?

NOT REALLY SOMEWHAT VERY

4. What is your attitude toward reading the Bible?

HARD TO GET EXCITED SOMETIMES ENJOY IT REALLY LOVE IT

5. Do you find yourself putting what you read in the Bible to use in your life?

NOT REALLY SOMETIMES YES, OFTEN

6. What is the biggest obstacle standing in the way of you being more committed to reading the Bible?

Answers will vary to all of the questions on this page.

7. Describe the kind of relationship you want to have with the Bible and how you want your life to be impacted by it?

**“[13] NOW WHEN THEY SAW THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN, AND PERCEIVED THAT THEY WERE UNEDUCATED, COMMON MEN, THEY WERE ASTONISHED. AND THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS.”**

**ACTS 4:13**

**SESSION 2**

# SMALL GROUP INTRO

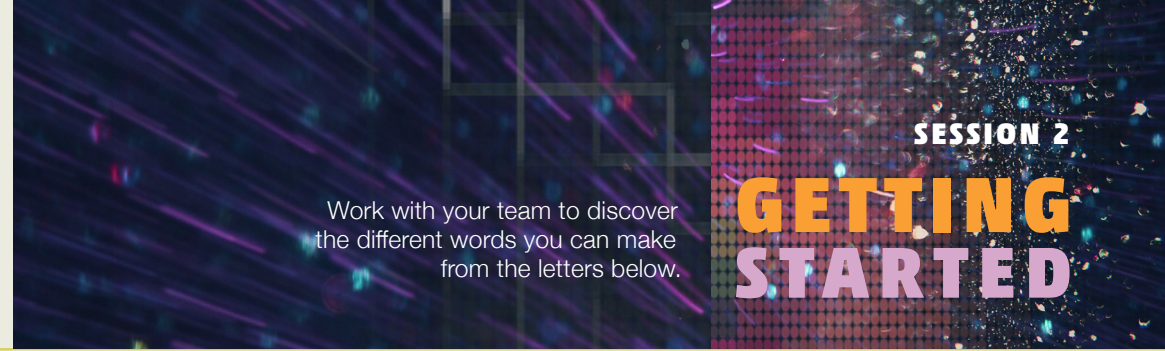
Let's pretend for a second that your goal is to be a famous singer. If you were asked to explain how you were going to accomplish this, you might answer by saying that you would seek out agents, try to buy studio time to make a demo, or start a grass-roots social media campaign to get your name out.

What if your goal was to be a professional athlete? Would you know how to get there? You'd likely know that you had to train, eat right, develop the specific skills your sport called for, go to camps or tryouts where you'd get noticed, and so on.

No matter what you want to do in life, you have to have a plan for how to make it happen. It's no different when it comes to living a life that matters. You have to know HOW that happens.

That's what this session is all about; HOW to live a life that makes a TRUE difference.

What are you waiting for? Let's find out.



Work with your team to discover the different words you can make from the letters below.

**SESSION 2**

# GETTING STARTED

Answers will vary.

G S H T O

## SESSION 2

# DIGGING IN

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and write down what you think is interesting or important about the story.

- **What do you know about Paul's life before he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus?**
  - Answer: He was a persecutor of the church.
- **How did Paul go from persecuting the Church to helping build it?**
  - Answer: He had an encounter with Jesus that led to a transformation in his life.
- **What details or important points jumped out at you?**
  - Allow students to share.
- **Paul says that what was passed along was of "first importance." What is Paul referring to? What is of "first importance"?**
  - Answer: It's the Gospel. Before they did anything else as the church, they must start with their faith in Christ. Paul points to himself having received it because he wants them to understand he was no better than them until Jesus transformed his life.
- **Why does Paul explain what Jesus did, including who all he appeared to?**
  - Answer: If the Corinthians didn't believe Paul, they could, in theory, ask these folks if what Paul was saying is true.
- **Paul calls himself the least deserving person that Christ appeared to. This is an interesting note because we look at Paul as a legend within the church as a whole. Why do you think Paul would think he was the least of those Jesus appeared to?**
  - Answer: Paul had a proper view of himself within the Kingdom of God. Paul was humble. It could be easy for Paul to view himself as a hero within the church, but that thought process could create more problems down the road.
- **Look at vs. 10. What does Paul say was given to him to make him who he is?**
  - Answer: The grace of God.
- **How does Paul react to this gift of grace from God?**
  - Answer: He worked harder than anyone else. He made sure the grace of God was not given in vain.

Read the following verses and discuss them with your group.

**"[9] BECAUSE, IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT JESUS IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED. [10] FOR WITH THE HEART ONE BELIEVES AND IS JUSTIFIED, AND WITH THE MOUTH ONE CONFESSES AND IS SAVED. [11] FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME." [12] FOR THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN JEW AND GREEK; FOR THE SAME LORD IS LORD OF ALL, BESTOWING HIS RICHES ON ALL WHO CALL ON HIM. [13] FOR "EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." - ROMANS 10:9-13**

1. Verse 9 says that "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Saved from what?

Answer: Help students see that everyone sins (Rom. 3:23), and our sin separates us from God and earns death for us (Rom. 6:23). Apart from a saving relationship with Jesus, we can never be at peace with God. When we come to faith in Jesus, we gain eternal life with God (John 3:16) and a life of purpose and meaning on this earth (John 10:10).

2. What does Paul say we must do to be saved?

Answer: Confess and believe. Paul says that salvation comes through faith in the person and work of Jesus.

**"[8] FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH. AND THIS IS NOT YOUR OWN DOING; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, [9] NOT A RESULT OF WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE MAY BOAST. [10] FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND, THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM." - EPHESIANS 2:8-10**

1. How are verses 8-9 similar to the Romans 10:9-10?

Answer: Both remind us that we are saved by our faith in Jesus, not by anything we do. This is a gift from God, a result of His great grace.

2. As we talk about living a life that matters, a life of impact, what does verse 10 say to us about WHY God wants us to come to saving faith in Him?

Answer: God has plans to use us! He wants our lives to be transformed by Jesus so that through us, He can transform the world. Part of why we were created by God is to be used by Him. This is a powerful truth and one that changes the way we see our lives and the impact we can have.

## SESSION 2

# WRAPPING UP

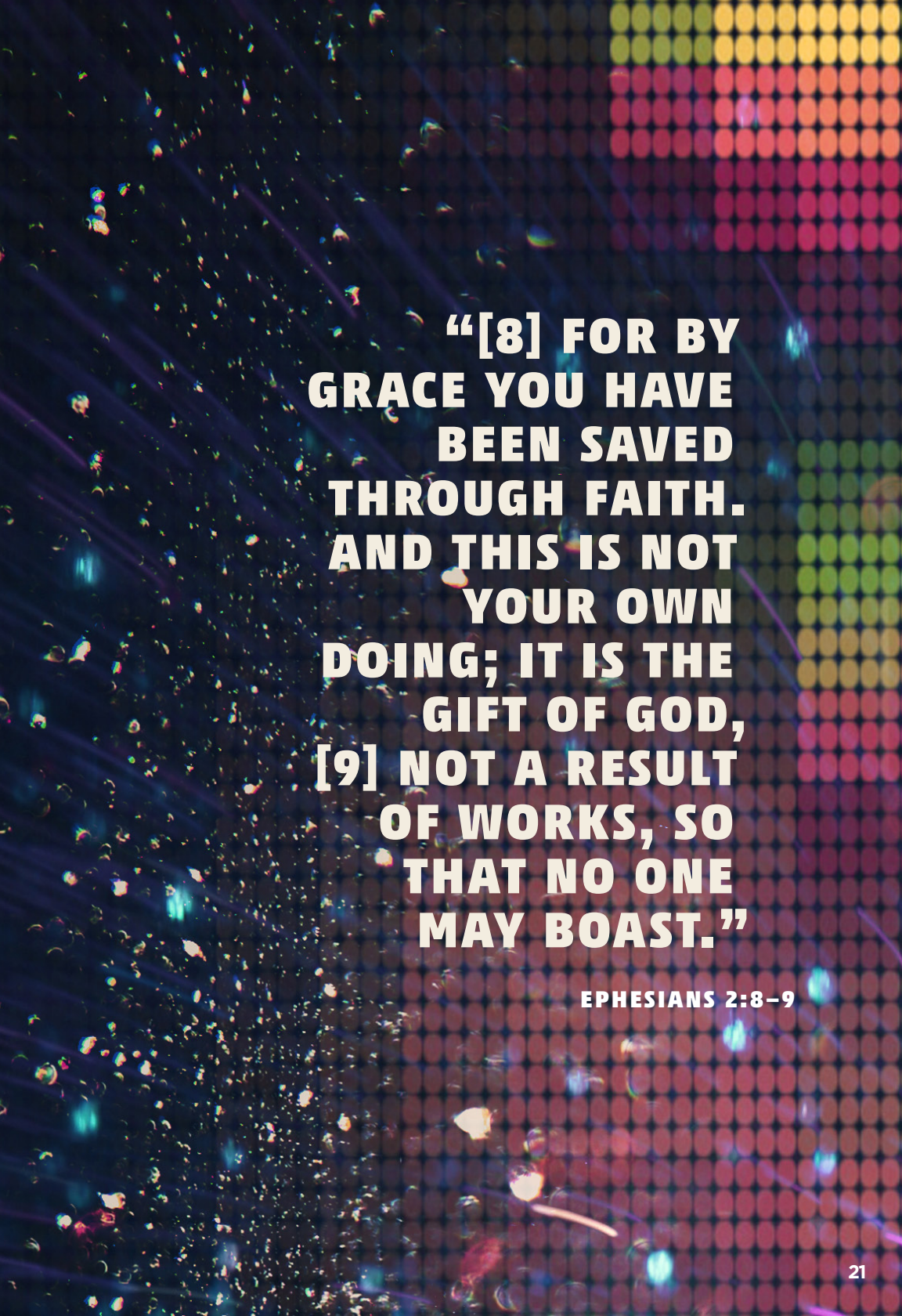
Take some time to process what you've learned in this session. Use the following prompts to help guide you.

**PROMPT 1: WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO YOUR FAITH THAT SALVATION COMES THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS AND NOT THROUGH OUR OWN EFFORTS?**

Answers will vary for all of these questions.

**PROMPT 2: WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD RIGHT NOW? IS ANYTHING STANDING IN THE WAY OF A MORE COMMITTED DEVOTION TO HIM?**

**PROMPT 3: HOW ARE YOU SPENDING THE LIFE JESUS PURCHASED FOR YOU ON THE CROSS? HOW IS GOD WORKING THROUGH YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD?**



**“[8] FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH. AND THIS IS NOT YOUR OWN DOING; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, [9] NOT A RESULT OF WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE MAY BOAST.”**

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

**SESSION 3**

# SMALL GROUP INTRO

Friends.

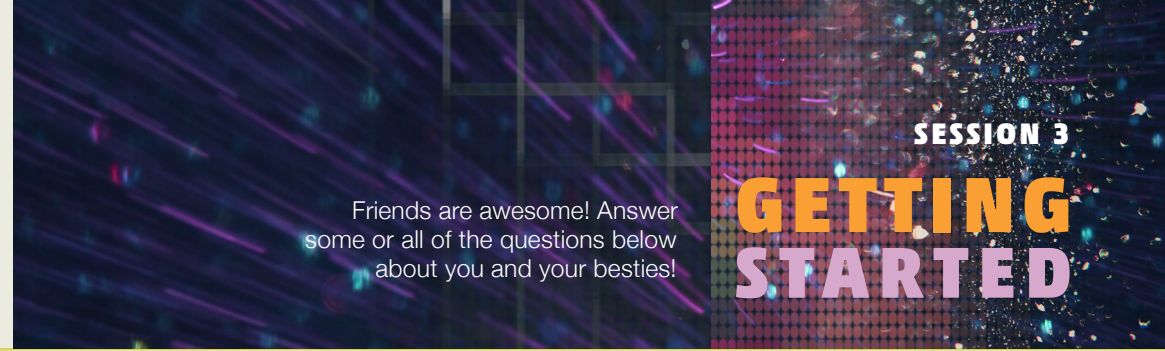
Just the word makes you smile, doesn't it?

It's been said that for a teenager like yourself, the most important aspect of your life is your friends. Think about it: the backdrop of your daily life is your friendships. The people you hang out with are tied to nearly every part of your life as a teenager.

Here's a quick thought: have you ever considered that your friends were a strength source God gave you to help you live a life that matters?

Whaaaaat????

It's true. God calls us to live a life of impact. But He doesn't expect us to do it on our own. He has surrounded you with friends who can help you stay bold in your faith. Don't believe it? Let's look at exactly what the Bible has to say about it.



**SESSION 3**

# GETTING STARTED

Friends are awesome! Answer some or all of the questions below about you and your besties!

**WHAT IS THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE WITH A FRIEND?**

Answers will vary for each of these questions.

**WRITE DOWN A TIME WHEN YOU REALLY NEEDED A FRIEND AND THEY WERE THERE.**

**WHAT IS THE BEST GIFT A FRIEND HAS EVER GIVEN YOU?**

**WRITE DOWN A TIME WHEN A FRIEND KEPT YOU FROM MAKING A FOOL OF YOURSELF.**

**WHAT IS THE MOST SCARED YOU'VE EVER BEEN WITH A FRIEND?**

**WRITE DOWN THAT ONE THING A FRIEND BORROWED FROM YOU THAT THEY STILL HAVEN'T GIVEN BACK.**

**WRITE DOWN THE BEST MEAL YOU'VE EVER EATEN WITH A FRIEND.**

**WRITE DOWN THE WORST MEAL YOU'VE EVER EATEN WITH A FRIEND.**

**WHAT IS THE MOST EMBARRASSING THING THAT'S EVER HAPPENED TO YOU WITH A FRIEND?**

**WHAT IS THE HARDEST YOU'VE EVER LAUGHED WITH A FRIEND?**

## SESSION 3

# DIGGING IN

Read Romans 16 and write down what you think is interesting or important about what you read.

- **OK, what details or important points jumped out at you?**
  - Allow students to share. Engage in discussion as you go. (Continue with the rest of the questions below, omitting any that you've already covered based on your students' responses.)
- **How many names does Paul mention? Take a guess.**
  - Answer: 37 people, though he references multiple households, so the number is higher than that.
- **What impression does the leave with you? What is the takeaway from a list like this?**
  - Paul lived a life of impact. But he SHARED this life with so many. So many people's lives intersected with his life as they all served the Lord together.
- **Paul gives this warning in verses 17-18. What is the nature of his warning?**
  - Answer: To watch out for people who cause divisions and create obstacles.
- **What does this warning imply about all the people Paul had just mentioned?**
  - Answer: That the opposite was true about them. The people Paul listed in verses 1-16 were people who were unified with Paul and on the same page with him.
- **Look at some of the descriptions of the people who served with Paul. Which ones stand out as the most significant descriptions?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **What do you think it made these people feel like to hear Paul speak about them this way?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **In your own words, what impact did Paul's friends seem to have on his ministry?**
  - Paul expresses affection and love and appreciation for these people. Paul seems to know each one so well and express joy in the role they all played together in living lives of impact.

Read the following verses and discuss them with your group.

**“[9] TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOOD REWARD FOR THEIR TOIL. [10] FOR IF THEY FALL, ONE WILL LIFT UP HIS FELLOW. BUT WOE TO HIM WHO IS ALONE WHEN HE FALLS AND HAS NOT ANOTHER TO LIFT HIM UP! [11] AGAIN, IF TWO LIE TOGETHER, THEY KEEP WARM, BUT HOW CAN ONE KEEP WARM ALONE? [12] AND THOUGH A MAN MIGHT PREVAIL AGAINST ONE WHO IS ALONE, TWO WILL WITHSTAND HIM—A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN.” - ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12**

1. Overall, what are these verses trying to say?

**Answers will vary. But this ancient, Old Testament wisdom literature sums up what Paul knew in the 1st Century and what we know today: life is more meaningful with friends. We are able to make a greater impact when we move forward with likeminded people at our sides.**

2. Can you think of some examples of how a 21st century teenager may “fall.” What about some examples of how a friend can lift them up when they fall?

**Answers will vary. Allow your students time to really consider this question because of how relevant it is to their daily lives.**

3. In your own words, what does it mean that “a threefold cord is not quickly broken”?

**Answers will vary. But help them understand that the analogy is how strong we are together (a rope made of three strands) as opposed to how weak we can be alone (a rope of one strand).**

**“[12] THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. [13] GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAT SOMEONE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS. [14] YOU ARE MY FRIENDS IF YOU DO WHAT I COMMAND YOU.” - JOHN 15:12-14**

1. How did Jesus love us? Give some examples.

**Answers will vary, but help students see that Jesus' love for us was selfless, sacrificial, trustworthy, honest, and so on.**

2. What does it look like to love your friends in the same way Jesus loved us?

**Answers will vary. Allow your students to share their responses and to really think about what this looks like in their context.**

3. You likely will not ever be called to literally give up your own life for your friend's life. But what does it look like to sacrifice your own needs or wants to put others first?

**Answers will vary.**



**SESSION 3**

# WRAPPING UP

*Work with your group to identify how you can be a friend who lifts other people up and accept other people's help in your life.*

**I AM CALLED TO PICK OTHER PEOPLE UP.**

Answers will vary for each of these questions.

**I NEED OTHERS TO PICK ME UP.**

**“[12] THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. [13] GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAT SOMEONE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.”**

**JOHN 15:12-13**

# SMALL GROUP INTRO

Who do you trust?

Who in your life is a “given”? In other words, when they say something, you can count on it?

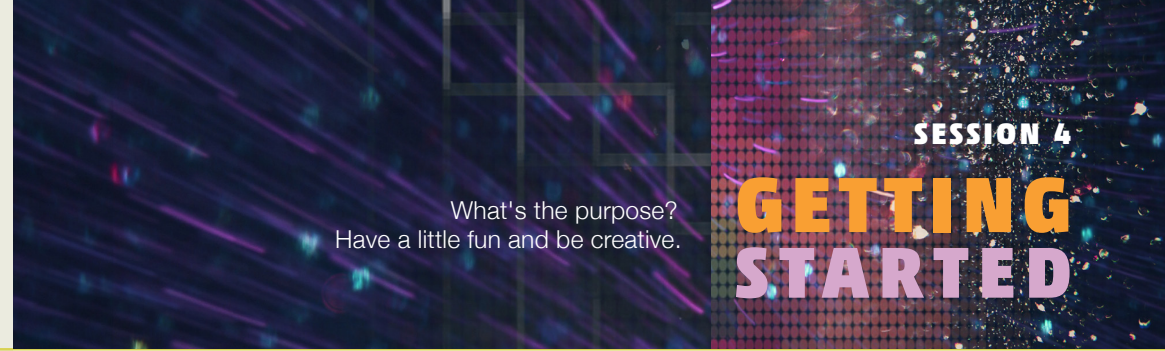
Hopefully, you have people in your life who are dependable. You can count on them. They won't let you down.

But here's the truth: even the most trustworthy people we know will occasionally let us down. Even if they don't mean to. Why? Because they are human. As good as they are, and as good as they want to be, they aren't perfect.

How cool is it that we don't have to worry about this when it comes to God. He will never let us down. His way is the best. And this is especially important when it comes to living a life of impact.

God has a plan for us. And if we follow that plan, we'll live a life that matters. It's that simple.

Let's see what the Bible has to say about this.



## GETTING STARTED

What's the purpose?  
Have a little fun and be creative.

Answers will vary for each of these.

## SESSION 4

# DIGGING IN

Read Romans 16 and write down what you think is interesting or important about what you read.

- **Where was the land that Abraham was called to go?**
  - Answer: God didn't tell him. God is asking us to demonstrate faith as we search for and follow His will.
- **Why do you think the author points out Abraham's age?**
  - Answer: First, it spoke to the miracle God was going to do. Second, age is not a determining factor for God's will. Abraham had lived a full life. He could have decided to not obey. But he obeyed.
- **What limits does the world put on you because of your age?**
  - Remind students that God chose Abraham to live a life that mattered in spite of an age that, to anyone watching, would have disqualified him.
- **Abraham and his family traveled through quite a few lands on their journey toward the land they had been promised. What was Abraham's reaction when God spoke to him while they were in Canaan?**
  - Answer: He stopped and built an altar. In fact, Abraham built multiple altars as he journeyed through the lands.
- **Why do you think he built altars in all of those places?**
  - Answer: Abraham wanted to remember that as he journeyed, he was following a God of purpose.
- **Do you remember any of the rest of Abraham's story? Do you think the road to becoming a great nation was easy or hard? Why is this important to understand?**
  - Answer: He didn't have a simple or easy journey. There were multiple moments he thought he would die. We know the road wasn't smooth. We aren't promised a smooth journey when following God's will.
- **What is the promise given to Abraham about those he would encounter while following God's will?**
  - Answer: "I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse." We have God on our side, and this is the relationship that matters most!

Read the following verses and discuss them with your group.

**“[1] I APPEAL TO YOU THEREFORE, BROTHERS, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY AND ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. [2] DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND, THAT BY TESTING YOU MAY DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD, WHAT IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT.” - ROMANS 12:1-2**

1. When Paul says that we are to present our bodies as a sacrifice to God, do you know what he means?  
Answer: Just like in the Old Testament, when a sacrifice was made to God, we are to give our lives to Him. Holding nothing back. It means going all in!
2. Verse 2 has a very interesting challenge. What does it mean to conform to something?  
Answer: It means to become like something, to be molded into the same shape as something.
3. What are we to be conformed to: The world? Or God?  
Answer: God. That's what Paul is insinuating here. We will all be shaped like something. The call on us as Believers is to live a life shaped like God.
4. What does Paul say happens when we surrender our lives to God and desire to live like Him?  
Answer: We are in the perfect place to know and experience God's will for our lives.

**“[5] TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING. [6] IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE WILL MAKE STRAIGHT YOUR PATHS.” - PROVERBS 3:5-6**

1. What role does trust play in living out God's will for us?  
Answer: We have to trust that God's will is good. We have to trust that God is in control and has His glory and our best interest in mind.
2. Can you think of a time when you “leaned on your own understanding,” and not God's? How did that work out?  
Answers will vary.
3. When Proverbs 6 says that God will “make straight your paths,” it doesn't mean that things will always be easy. What DOES it mean?  
Answer: It means that even though we will still experience tough times, God is ultimately in control. He is directing our lives. He will lead us in the right direction, according to His will.

## SESSION 4

# WRAPPING UP

*Consider the following questions as you think about what it looks like to know and follow God's will for your life.*

### QUESTION 1:

Who do you think is better suited to direct your life, you or God? How does this change the way you feel about following God's plan for you?

Answers will vary to each of these questions.

### QUESTION 2:

Do you truly want to live a life of impact? If so, what's keeping you from truly surrendering your life to God?

### QUESTION 3:

God wants you to follow His will for your life. If you want to follow God's will for your life, and you ask God to show you His will, what do you think will happen?

### QUESTION 4:

God gifts you with a personality and experiences. How is God leading you to use your passions and your experiences to impact the world around you for His glory?

# CLOSING

Living a life of impact isn't easy. But it's worth it.

What you'll find as you grow older is that you want your life to count for something. You want the days that you spend on this earth to make a difference. To mean something.

Here's the truth: you can attempt to make your mark for your sake. You can attempt to shine the spotlight on you. And you may even be successful. But at the end of the day, what have you really done? What have you left anyone that really lasts?

The alternative is to live your life in such a way that you make an impact for the sake of God. That your life points people to Him. That you allow yourself to be used by God in such a way that the world is different because God has worked through you to make it so. In this example, the difference you've made is an eternal one. Your life matters because it brings glory to God.

Which scenario would you rather pursue?

Don't miss this opportunity to live a life that matters, a life that makes an impact for the Kingdom. You're on your way. Don't let up. Don't give in. Keep pushing.

You got this.