

Small Group Study

ICE BREAKER:

⇒ **Share a time when you had a decision to make and weren't sure what to do? What decision did you end up making? How did it work out?**

⇒ **Share a difficult time in your life. Did it cause you to doubt/question God in any way? Was God an anchor for your soul?**

****Leaders, make sure to leave time for BRINGING IT HOME.****

If running out of time focus on the questions in pink.

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE Review

- What is the title of the current sermon series?
- What are we trying to make visible?
- What are some ways this happens? (If unsure, see 2 Corinthians 1:4; 2:15-16; 3:18)

- In your own words, what is the difference between religion and a relationship with Jesus?
- Why do they look similar and are hard to tell the difference?
- Why is it important to know the difference between the two?

6 QUESTIONS TO HELP US DETERMINE IF WE ARE PURSUING RELIGION OR A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

#1 WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH—DO YOU KEEP YOUR INTEGRITY?

Read 2 CORINTHIANS 4:2

- Share a time when you chose to ignore your conscience and do what you knew was wrong? What was your motivation? What was the outcome?

- Does knowingly doing the wrong thing reveal anything about our faith/trust in God? If so, what?

- Do you think Jesus would rather have us memorize Scripture—or live it out?
- “True faith keeps its integrity... no matter the circumstances.” Do you agree or disagree?

#2 WHEN CONFRONTED WITH SIN—ARE YOU TEACHABLE?

- How do you think most people respond when their actions are questioned?
- Why is that? What is the source of their pride and defensiveness? (see 2 Cor. 4:3)
- When you read the bible/hear sermon—do you apply it to yourself & do what it says?

#3 WHO'S AT THE CENTER OF YOUR WORLD?

- Is your faith based on how good you are.— or how good God is?
- When you do a good deed—do you get up-set if no one notices or thanks you?
- Why do you think a religious person can do the right things—and still not be satisfied?

#4 WHEN TROUBLES COME—IS YOUR FAITH DEEP ENOUGH TO TRUST GOD?

Read 2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-10

- When have you experience God's presence in this way?
- Why do we grow most through suffering?

#5 DO YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR STRUGGLES CAN FURTHER GOD'S PLAN?

- Who is your favorite bible hero? How did God use or rescue him/her?
- We tend to focus on the deliverance... yet without the hardship... there is no miracle. Why do you think we overlook the struggle?
- Religion prays for God to change other people—true faith prays for God to “change the person within me.” Agree or disagree?

#5 DO YOU HAVE AN ETERNAL FOCUS?

- “Christ” did not come to do away with suffering. He did not come to explain it. He came to fill it with His presence.” What does this mean? Do you agree?
- “God will look you over... not for medals or degrees... but for scars.” Why are our scars so important to our faith?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

BRINGING IT HOME.

- Based on these questions - do you lean more toward religion or a relationship?
- When/what was the last Next Step of faith you took?
- What do you think is the next “Next Step” God is calling you to take?
- PRAYER TIME: Take requests. Pray for requests, asking for spiritual healing as well
- Pray the group would honestly examine their heart based on these questions.
- Pray that each one in your group would identify and begin taking their Next Step with God.