



Made For More Community Sep 2: One With God

Series Summary: Groups begin with time to connect. We're not just here to sit in a circle. We're here to know others and be known by others. Second, we open our Bibles together. We don't just study information. We want to know and live the Word of God. Third, we open our hands to serve and care for one another. In a small group, everyone matters, and everyone contributes. There is no such thing as a spectator.

Big Idea: How can we personally grow one with God, but also see our small group grow one with God in the same way?

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Series Lead in: We are beginning this year by diving into the aspects of our small groups. How should they look and feel...what should we see in them?...What should be the fruit of them? And so on.

Opening:

- When have you felt closest to God in your life? What made that season different?
- What usually helps you feel connected to God? What tends to distract you?

For a lot of students, that answer is camp. I think this is because it's three straight days of worship, serving, and church community. But I also think it's because we're away from home, and away from distractions. AKA we are not distracted away from the Lord.

Transition: We see the faith that Jesus has because of the relationship he has with the Father...

Context: This prayer comes immediately after Jesus finishes teaching His disciples in John 13-16. Judas has already left. The cross is hours away. This is not theoretical theology. This is Jesus praying about what matters most before His death.

Jesus isn't just teaching here. He is interceding. He is going to the Father on our behalf!

JOHN 17:1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

"Glorify" (Greek: doxazō)

- Means to reveal nature
- Jesus is saying: Let the cross reveal who You really are.

JOHN 17:2-3 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

- God granted Jesus authority to give people life by giving His life for people!
- Eternal life ≠ just simply living forever
- Eternal life = knowing God

GET THIS: God's goal isn't simply that you would believe in Him, but that you would know Him.

One goal each of our small groups must have: Let's grow to KNOW GOD together. This isn't just a social group, though we will have fun together. This isn't just a serving group, though we will make a difference together. This isn't just a Bible study group, though we will learn truth together. This is a group where we will grow to KNOW GOD together.

"Know" (Greek: ginōskō)

- Experiential, relational knowledge
- Not facts about God, but fellowship with God

DESIRE TO KNOW THE LORD

We will grow to know and live in relationship with God TOGETHER.

We don't just learn about God, we experience life with Him TOGETHER.

- Open Our Bibles - know Him through His word.
- Open Our Mouths - to understand truth and to encourage others
- Open Our Hearts - know Him as we pray
- Open Our Hands - know Him as we care for and serve one another

In every small group, let this be your cue:

- Open the Bible - not just to learn but to know God
- Open Your Mouth - not just to discuss but to know God
- Open Your Heart - not just to pray but to know God
- Open Your Hand - not just to do good but to know God

When we do this, we learn how to do what Jesus prays for next.

JOHN 17:4-5 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

How did Jesus glorify the Father? How did He show us who God really is? He finished the work. He did God's will 100% of the time and brought God glory 100% of the time.

As we grow in our relationship with God we can, and should, glorify Him, too.

The difference is commitment: Knowing God leads to living for God.

JOHN 17:6-9 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

Jesus reminds us who He is praying for. He's praying for those God gave Him. He is praying for people like you and me, and as He does, don't miss it:

- We are His because God chose us.

- We are His because we heard the Gospel and believed.

Transition to Groups: We will continue discussing how knowing Jesus leads to a greater community aspect within our groups.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

READ: John 17:1-9 TOGETHER AS A GROUP

1. **Jesus defines eternal life as “knowing God.” How is that different from how people usually think about eternal life? If eternal life is about “knowing God” today, how does that change how you see your day-to-day life?**
2. **Would you say your relationship with God is about knowing Him, or knowing more about Him? Why?**
 - **Follow-up: What do you think is the difference between personally knowing Jesus, and just knowing about him? (Another way of asking this is “what is the difference between faith and knowledge?”)**
3. **Lead-in:** As a group, we said we want to know God by opening four areas of our lives:

Open Our Bibles – knowing Him through His Word

Open Our Mouths – knowing Him speaking truth, asking questions, encouraging others

Open Our Hearts – knowing Him through honest prayer

Open Our Hands – knowing Him through serving and caring

Which of these comes most naturally to you right now? Which is most challenging? Why?

4. What would it look like for this group to truly “know God together,” not just simply sit in a room together? How can this group help you know Him better?

5. What is one simple step you can take this week to grow in knowing God?

PRAYER

Spend time praying together. Ask for prayer requests and pray for the group's current needs. Also, pray for the group to grow to know God together. Encourage everyone who is comfortable to pray for the group and for what God wants to do in and through it. Close the prayer by thanking God for sending Jesus so that you can know God.