

# Formed

## Week 3 | Faith That is on Fire

### ■ BOTTOM LINE

We have all likely had seasons when our faith felt strong and on fire, and seasons when our faith has felt tested or perhaps even lost. Faith that is on fire requires a growing connection with God and a cause that makes you feel alive!

### ■ GOAL OF THE GROUP

Discover what makes our faith come alive, the obstacles that hinder us from living with faith on fire, and the fuel source that keeps our faith fires burning.

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Psalms 51:5-12, Psalm 32:6-7, Psalm 121:1-8, Hebrews 11:1

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's something you've done that required a big leap of faith, but made you feel alive or even on fire?
2. How would you rate the "fire" of your faith right now on scale of 1-10? (1 is low, 10 is high) Explain your rating.
  - What makes your faith feel truly alive?
  - Are there unique circumstances or relationships that contribute?
  - On the flip side, have you ever felt like your faith was under fire instead of on fire? (broken dream, difficult circumstance, broken or estranged relationship)
3. A faith on fire often starts with a unique spark that grows in our hearts. We are uniquely made, with unique passions and desires. And since we're made in God's image, we also have His heart of compassion and desire for justice, peace, and wholeness in the world. Do you have a cause that creates a healthy fire in your heart?
  - Is there something glaringly obvious to you and nobody is doing anything about it?
  - Is there something that will help others around you and potentially generations to come?
4. Faith on fire often requires saying "yes" to something that is much bigger than you or much more than you think you can handle. A great cause requires a great God.
  - Is there a leap of faith or big step God has been nudging you to take? Is there anything holding you back?
  - What obstacles tend to keep you from living with a faith on fire?
5. David models and shows us how desperation can lead us to a healthy posture of dependence. Share about a time when you felt completely desperate, or share something you feel desperate about right now.
6. **Read Psalm 51:5-12 and Discuss.** When life overwhelms him, David admits he needs God and actively prays for a way to reignite the faith he once had.
  - What stands out to you with regard to David's posture or prayers?
  - What does David desire at the heart level?
7. Life will come at us hard and can extinguish our fire if we let it. We need to continually turn back to God as the source of our power, the fuel to keep our faith fires burning. **Read Psalm 32:6-7, Psalm 121:1-8, and Hebrews 11:1 and Discuss.** Which of these passages speaks to you or gives you reassurance or the truth you need to hear with regard to your "faith on fire" nudge or risk?

"Figure out what to give your life for and you'll know what to give your time to."

– Bob Goff

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## TRY THIS

*You may have heard the saying, "People will come from miles away to watch a fire burn." People are drawn to fire. In the same way, when we're living out our faith in a radical, bigger-than-ourselves kind of way, people will be drawn to wonder why. Pray each day this week and listen for God to respond: "Dear God, you are our steady Rock, even when our faith wavers or circumstances overwhelm us. Grant us the ears to hear when you are inviting us into a leap of faith, and the courage to say yes. Help us to rely fully on you as the source to keep our faith fires burning. We pray that as we daily choose to live a faith on fire, that you would draw others to your love, your kindness, and the live of adventure that you offer. Amen"*

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## Week 1 | Family of Origin

### BOTTOM LINE

God's desire for family is that it would display the love of God and be a light to those looking in. While some of us may have come from families that harmed us more than helped us, God is ready and able to use our past and even the brokenness of our family experience for the purposes of His Kingdom.

### GOAL OF THE GROUP

Acknowledge the pain and brokenness that many of us experienced in our families of origin; develop an understanding of how God can bring good and purpose out of our stories.

### SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 16:1-12; Romans 8:28; Galatians 4:6-7

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a family tradition you loved or something you appreciate about your family and upbringing?
2. Share a significant experience you had in your family that really shaped you. It could be positive or negative.
3. Can you think of a conversation or experience in your family where the words spoken to you really impacted you? Haunted you? Have stayed with you until today? Again, it could be positive or negative. *(Examples: Your parents always said, "Why can't you be more like your brother/sister?" or your parents never told you they loved you. Some of you may have even suffered abuse – emotional, verbal, or physical.)*
4. **Read 1 Samuel 16:1-12.** Samuel's job was to anoint the next king. What do you notice about Jesse's attitude toward his son David?
5. David likely experienced feelings of rejection and unworthiness, not unlike many of us. **Read Romans 8:28.**
  - a. Do you believe this is true with regard to your family experience? Why or why not? If not, what makes it difficult?
  - b. If you have seen God use parts of your broken family experience for good, share with the group.
6. It's possible that God's ability to bring good out of your family of origin may involve coming to a place of forgiveness on your part. This may not mean reconciliation or full restoration of a broken relationship, but it does mean coming to a place of peace and freedom in your heart. What circumstance or relationship do you struggle to forgive?
7. Often our family of origin plays a large part in shaping our identity into adulthood. **Read Galatians 4:6-7.** Despite our family upbringing or experience, we are sons and daughters of God. That truth gives us a positional identity to cling to that can never be taken away. How does this truth give you peace and freedom?

No matter the family experience you grew up with, God is ready and able NOW to do more than you could ask or even imagine – to provide healing for past hurts, to heal broken relationships, and to use your story for His glory and the greater purposes of His Kingdom.



### TRY THIS

*Read Ephesians 3:20-21. Spend some quiet moments in reflection. Perhaps God wants to speak to you about His being there in your times of deep family hurt; perhaps He will prompt you to a relationship or circumstance of forgiveness that He wants to lead you through; or perhaps He wants to give you a picture of how He desires to use your family experience for something good. Pray: "Lord, we know that family is your design, and that you desire families to reflect the love and care for one another that you have for your children. We know that you see us; You see the wounds that we have carried, the experiences have shaped us. Speak to us now – what do you want us to know? And give us the courage and faith to take steps of obedience and response as you call us to. Amen."*

# Formed

## Week 2 | Friends in the Present

### ■ BOTTOM LINE

We need people around us. We were not designed to do life alone.

### ■ GOAL OF THE GROUP

God has a healthy design for community, qualities that create great friendships. It's been said that we are the sum of those who surround us. Who surrounds us? What next steps could God be asking with regard to the friendships and community (or lack thereof) in our lives?

### ■ SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 12:26; Job 2:11; Proverbs 13:20; John 15:13

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share about a best friend from your childhood or adolescence. What is one memory that brings you joy? What is one word that characterizes a great friendship?
2. One of Kensington's values is "as a family." In other words, our desire is that the people in our communities would develop friendships that they would consider as close as family, because we believe God designed us to live in community and that we are better together. One of the ways we measure this is by asking people to consider who their "2:00am friends" are. If you needed something in the middle of the night, who would you call? Why?
3. Read the following verses out loud together and discuss. What characteristics of friendship do you notice? Share a time when you experienced one of these characteristics and how it affected a friendship in your life.
  - Proverbs 17:17
  - Proverbs 12:26
  - Job 2:11
  - Proverbs 13:20
  - John 15:13
4. Has there been a time when you felt let down or betrayed by a friendship? How did it affect you? Did it cause you to be fearful or skeptical to engage in that kind of friendship again? Why or why not?
5. If you're willing to share, has there been a time when you were the one to let a friend down? Maybe you weren't there when someone needed you or you dropped the ball on a big moment, or betrayed their trust? How did this experience impact you? Did it cause you to believe you are undeserving of friendship or you don't have what it takes to sustain a great friendship? Why or why not?
6. Today, what keeps you from having the kind of friendships you desire?
7. We believe God desires healthy, authentic community for all of us. Perhaps He is asking you to take a step of faith with regard to one of the following characteristics when it comes to your friendships:
  - **Time** – choose to be available and interruptible
  - **Truth** – choose to confront when appropriate; choose humility when confronted
  - **Transparency** – choose vulnerability and authenticity
  - **Trust** – choose to believe the best, not assume the worst

Which of these comes easiest to you? Which of these is most difficult for you? Why?

We need one another. There are times in all our lives when others will have strength we lack, and times when we have strength to spare.



## TRY THIS

*Spend a few minutes in quiet reflection each day this week. What is God speaking to you regarding the friendships in your life? What is one step you can take this week toward developing a healthy friendship? Pray this Prayer: "God, thank you that your design was never for us to do life alone. We confess and seek your forgiveness for the times when we have not displayed your character in our friendships. Give us courage to take the best next step, whatever it is that you've spoken to us, when it comes to our friendships. Help us to trust you in our response of obedience, regardless of the outcome. Amen"*