

Defining Moments

"A Golf Course"

Week 4 – June 26, 2022

Scripture: Psalm 18; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12; Matthew 14:23

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Think about your closest friends and family. How often do you talk with them?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Defining moments are moments where we see God move in unexplained ways. These moments define our life and how we walk with God. In this fourth week of defining moments we lean into cultivating a personal prayer life and relationship with God. Think about prayer in your own life. Do you pray when you face a crisis? Do you pray before you eat and/or go to bed? Do you pray when you are in need? Do you pray when you are exposed to the needs of others? Do you pray when you are in the car driving to work? Maybe you are good at prayer; maybe you don't pray at all. We are all at different places in our journey, and that is okay. When we work towards cultivating a prayer life it could be the encouragement we need to connect with God in a fresh, new way.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. What is the difference between faith that looks like a set of beliefs to subscribe to and faith that centers around a relationship with God?
2. Read **Psalm 18**. Notice the movement of this Psalm noted below. It is David's response after God delivered him from the hands of his enemies. So often, we talk ABOUT God – who he is, how he is, what he has done, but we leave out conversation TO God. Discuss this contrast.
 - a. Verses 1-2: David is talking **to** God
 - b. Verses 3-24: David is talking **about** God and what the Lord has done
 - c. Verses 25-29: David is talking **to** God again
 - d. Verses 30-34: David is talking **about** God
 - e. Verses 35-50: David is talking **about** God and **to** God
3. During Jesus' short ministry on earth he prioritized prayer. Read **Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12, Matthew 14:23** and discuss why Jesus maintained his devotion to prayer.
 - a. Is there anyone in your life that models a life of prayer?
 - b. What role does prayer play in your life currently, and how could you nurture a prayer life with God?
 - c. How could cultivating a prayer life and relationship with God create space in your heart to yield to him?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Pray **Psalm 13** as a prayer template to express your current feelings and circumstances to the Lord:

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³ Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

Defining Moments

"Dinner Table"

Week 3 – June 19, 2022

Scripture: John 14:8-11; Galatians 1:10; Psalm 139:13-15

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Father's Day celebrates our earthly fathers, and it comes with highs for some people and lows for others. What feelings are stirred in you when Father's Day comes around each year? If you prefer not to answer, please feel permission to pass.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

There are critical moments in life that define our lives and faith. These defining moments could range from a birth of a child to a death of a loved one and everything in between. But some moments define how we view God, how we live in faith, and how our faith grows. These particular moments are ones where we see God move in unexplained ways and define how we walk with God. Reflect on how you understand yourself through the view of God as a father figure. Our identity can be transformed by our restored view of God.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Scripture helps us discover more about God and how he loves. In **John 14:8-11** Jesus is gathered with his disciples and answers their questions. They do not fully grasp that he is in fact God the Father. Jesus reveals the character of God, the love of God, and the foundation of God through the life of Jesus. Looking throughout the bible, how has God revealed himself prior to now, Jesus time on earth?
2. The disciples were asking questions based on their experiences. Where is he going? How will they find him? When can he teach them more? Consider this: *Our view of God is obstructed by our experiences.*
 - a. Thinking about your own life, what is your view of God? Are there any obstructions in your life that you tolerate because removing them is difficult?
 - b. Read **Galatians 1:10**. When we have obstructions, sometimes we look for healing and hope in places other than God. What types of idols can develop when we look elsewhere to satisfy the discontent in our hearts?
 - c. Where else other than God do you sometimes look to find identity?
3. Our view of God can be restored by the revelation of God's character. Our view of ourselves can be transformed by our restored view of God. Read **Psalm 139:13-15**. How is God restoring your view?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that he offers redemption. Praise God that His Word helps transform our identity by revealing his character. Thank God that when we are not trying to get our identity from humanity, we can offer humanity so much more. Ask God to remove any obstacles in our paths and restore our views of him. Praise him for his grace and patience and purpose.

Throughout the week, ask God to speak to you and give you a clearer understanding of your identity in Him; try praying this during your time together: *[Your Name] is loved by God, [Your Name] finds his/her identity in Him, and [Your Name] is powerless without Him.*

Defining Moments

"An Office"

Week 2 – June 12, 2022

Scripture: Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; John 21:15-17

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Is there something you have always wanted to learn but you are afraid you won't be good at it so you won't try? Perhaps a new sport, hobby, or foreign language. Share with the group.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Life is a journey and there are times when when it's full of obstacles, uncertainty, and defeat which can result in defining moments. We all fall short at times, make mistakes, and fail. But some failures are bigger than others. Some have bigger consequences. Sometimes the aftermath can take a long time, even years to clean up or recover from. These defining moments can create ripple effects that define perceptions, character, and behaviors. We would rather hide many of these mistakes, failures, struggles, and pains, but God wants to intervene and redefine our lives.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Peter, in his dedication and love for Jesus, declared that he would never betray Jesus (**Matthew 26:31-35**). Peter was passionate and impulsive with his words, He *loved* Jesus, and he probably believed there was no way he could ever deny him. But Jesus' prediction came true (**Matthew 26:69-75**). In his failure, Peter left. He ran away returning to his previous life of fishing.
 - a. Can you think of a time in your life when you experienced similar feelings after a moment of failure?
 - b. Have you ever found yourself wanting to leave, withdraw, quit, stop or run away? Or perhaps leaning towards working harder to ensure failure doesn't happen again?
2. Consider the difference between perfection and excellence. Someone who is pursuing excellence is doing their best at something within a given set of talent, resources, and time. But a person struggling with perfectionism is fueled by failure or pride with an obsessive fixation on doing something perfectly which can result in harmful neglect of other necessary or good things. How else can perfectionism be destructive?
3. Peter's story does not end with a life of fishing. One day he has an encounter with Jesus (**John 21:15-17**). Jesus doesn't let Peter's betrayal define who he is, and the same goes for us. When we allow failure to define us we create a distorted view of ourselves.
 - a. How can a distorted view create distance between us and others, or between us and God?
 - b. How does shifting our hearts and minds towards a purpose that's bigger than us correct a distorted view of ourselves?
 - c. Read **Romans 3:23-24**. How does God meet us in our failures?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He defines us. In Him we are loved, accepted, chosen, set-free, complete, redeemed, forgiven, secure; we are not our failures. Praise God that while failure is a part of our stories, it doesn't define our story!

Defining Moments

"A Lake House"

Week 1 – June 5, 2022

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21; James 3:5-10; Ephesians 4:1-3; Psalm 147:3

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Do you remember the phrase "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me"? Perhaps you used it as a kid. What comes to mind when you hear it today?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

All of us have experienced moments in our life that define who we are as a person – how we view God, how we live our lives, and how we live in faith. Today we begin a new series that will focus on four defining moments, the impact they had on shaping four people's lives and the lessons we can learn from God's truth.

Consider the power of human words against what God says about us in His Word. There are moments in our lives when something speaks over us, and it affects who we are. There are moments and words that are positive and affirming, and others that are negative. Our hope is that as we lean into these defining moments, whether we experience something positive or not, we will find freedom from the circumstances that burden us, and we will all grow in our faith because of it.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Have you ever had a moment where you said something you wish you could take back? What changed in your heart or what did you learn from this experience?
2. **Proverbs 18:21** says, *"The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences."* and **James 3:5** says, *"...the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire."* Our words have incredible power.
 - a. How can we become people who use our words to speak life instead of death?
 - b. Read **James 3:6-10**. Since the tongue is so difficult to control, those who control it can gain control in other areas of their life. What areas of your life could be positively impacted by a controlled tongue? How?
 - c. Read **Ephesians 4:1-3**. What could happen as a result of walking in humility, gentleness, and patience?
3. Healing is necessary for people with wounds, but the first step is acknowledging the wound. **Psalm 147:3** says, *"He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."* Is there a wound you need to acknowledge with God so that you can seek treatment and healing? Share with the group if you are comfortable.

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He wants to come along side us and tend to our wounds. God desires to speak life over us and to help us do the same for others. Praise God for the life-generating truth found in His Word.