



BREAKOUT Session 5
Keep Close to God

Welcome back to the BREAKOUT series for LifeGroups! This week we are taking step 5 – KEEP close to God. This is the intimacy step. It is about living out my life with God. It is about practicing the presence of God in my life 24/7, 365. I walk with God and he and I do life together. So prayer, reading the Bible and hanging out with other followers of Jesus are all things God is able to use to grow me and teach me. I just stay close to God. I confess when I blow it and I worship Him throughout the day.

CATCHING UP:

Keeping close to friends can be challenging, but it's worth it. God uses close friendships to bless our lives in many ways. Share with the group about a close friend you have now, or a close friend you had earlier in your life. What do you do to stay close?

MEMORY VERSE:

“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.” Matthew 5:6

VIDEO TEACHING: Watch session 5 together. (access the videos at breakoutseries.ca)

Romans 12:2

God wants to _____ me.

“To change the way you _____, change the way you _____.” Rick Warren

To Change the Way I think ...

_____ the bad.

_____ to God.

“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, (righteousness) for they will be satisfied.”
Matthew 5:6

How to develop righteous habits in my life.

My purpose will be to focus on _____ and his _____ for my life.

1. _____ – connecting with God’s TRUTH.
2. _____ – connecting in GROUP.
3. _____ – connecting with GOD.

STUDY:

NOTE: All Scriptures in this study are from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

Today we are focusing on the Intimacy step. Our goal is to explore how to KEEP Close to God as part of breaking free from hurts, hang-ups and habits in our life.

- How did Peter Ball’s testimony help you understand the value of prayer?
- How has watching the video helped you see the value of keeping close to God?

OBSTACLES TO KEEPING CLOSE TO GOD

Let’s begin our time by talking about obstacles that keep us from being close to God. Below is a list of some common obstacles. As a group, take a look at this list. What would you identify as a top obstacle in your life? Are there obstacles not on this list that are big ones for you?

Distractions – technology, noise, people vying for my attention.

Laziness – the lack of desire or discipline to keep close to God.

Spiritual warfare – Satan’s attempts to keep me from God.

Lack of understanding – failure to understand the importance of spiritual disciplines.

Too few examples – lack of people I know who can model closeness to God for me.

- After the group has identified obstacles, talk together about what you can do to overcome these obstacles.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES AND MY WALK WITH GOD.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES DEFINED: Discipline is defined as "training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior." Discipline is not part of the sin nature, but it is a natural component of the Christian life. In fact, almost nothing of any significance in our lives is ever accomplished without it. Spiritual disciplines can be described as those behaviors that augment our spiritual growth and enable us to grow to spiritual maturity. This process of spiritual growth and development begins to take place the moment a person encounters the risen Christ and comes to Him for salvation. Source: Got Questions – What are spiritual disciplines?

- What do you think of this definition of spiritual disciplines? Is there anything you would add or take away from this definition?
- While the spiritual disciplines are wonderful habits to establish in my life, they are only a means to an end – to walk closely with God. How can you move beyond the spiritual disciplines as the end goal and truly “keep close to God”?
- If you were going to describe to someone what it means to keep close to God, how would you describe it?
- How might spiritual disciplines help me to break free from hurts, hang-ups and habits?

Keeping close to God is something I need to be intentional about in my life. To do this well, I should regularly engage in spiritual habits that keep my mind and heart focused on God and His truth for my life. For our study, we’re going to look at 3 spiritual habits God can use in my life to keep me close to Him.

3 SPIRITUAL HABITS TO KEEP CLOSE TO GOD

PRAYER

Prayer Defined:

The most basic definition of prayer is “talking to God.” Prayer is not meditation or passive reflection; it is direct address to God. It is the communication of the human soul with the Lord who created the soul. Prayer is the primary way for the believer in Jesus Christ to communicate his emotions and desires with God and to fellowship with God. Source: Got Questions - What is Prayer?

- What do you think of this definition of prayer? Is there anything you would add or take away?
- “Prayer is direct address to God.” This is a mind blowing concept! How does this truth impact you?
- If you could ask God a question about prayer, what would you want to ask Him?

READ Philippians 4:7-8

- In what ways is prayer the antidote to worry?
- What does it look like to “pray about everything”?
- What about prayer do you find challenging? What do you find encouraging?

How are you doing these days with prayer?

1	2	3	4	5
I have lots of room to grow.		I’m praying pretty regularly.		Feeling close to God!

What next step could you take to grow the habit of prayer in your life?

READING THE BIBLE

READ: Psalm 1:1-3 “[Happy are] those who ... are always meditating on [God’s] laws and thinking about ways to follow him more closely. They are like trees along a riverbank ... Their leaves shall never wither, and all they do shall prosper.” THE MESSAGE

- Psalm 1 is a reflection on the blessings that come to those who commit their lives to walk closely with God. We are to “mediate on” or think about God’s Word, the Bible regularly. There is a difference between a quick glance at a verse of Scripture and really thinking about what God is saying to me through it. Author Eugene Peterson likens this to how we might visit the Grand Canyon. Rather than simply jumping off the tour bus, taking a quick selfie and then driving away, we want to find a place to sit and take in the beauty, or hike a trail that really allows us to experience the canyon. What does it look like to “meditate” on Scripture today?

READ: Joshua 1:8. "Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do."

- In this verse, God tells Joshua, Israel's leader, to study and think about the Bible as a regular habit in his life. God says that if Joshua does this he will "prosper and succeed in all you do". What does it look like in God's eyes to "prosper and succeed"?
- What resources have helped you to read and think about the Bible?

How are you doing these days with reading the Bible?

1	2	3	4	5
I'm not reading regularly	I'm reading pretty regularly			This is a key way I keep close to God!

What next step could you take to grow the habit of prayer in your life?

COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS

A third spiritual habit to keep close to God is community with others. We are talking here about regularly meeting with a few other people with the goal of encouraging each other to follow Jesus. Your LifeGroup is a great context for this to happen.

READ Hebrews 10:25

- Why is meeting together regularly with other followers of Jesus so important in helping us keep close to God?
- What does it look like to encourage each other?

READ Colossians 3:16 - "Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts."

- How does biblical community fill our lives with the message of Jesus?
- What does it look like to teach and counsel each other?

PRAYER

READ Psalm 139:1-5

“O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.
You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I’m far away.
You see me when I travel and when I rest at home.
You know everything I do.
You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.
You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.”

Spend some time thanking God for what He does to draw you close to Him. Ask God to help you take steps this week to keep close to Him.

Options for Further Study for your LifeGroup or on your Own.

The Role of the Holy Spirit to Keep Me Close to God

The Holy Spirit teaches me.

READ: John 14:26. “But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative – that is, the Holy Spirit – he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”

- The Holy Spirit helps me remember Jesus’ words and to understand how to apply them to my life. How have you experienced this recently?

He seals me and guarantees that I am God’s child.

READ: Ephesians 1:13 – 14 “And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give you the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”

- God’s Spirit guarantees the blessings we will experience with God now and in the future. The Spirit is also a foretaste of eternal life and power. How do these verses give you confidence that you are close to God?

The Holy Spirit helps me to pray.

READ: Jude 1:20. “But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourself safe in God’s love.”

- Jude instructs us to “pray in the power of the Holy Spirit”. What might be an indicator that we are doing this?

The Holy Spirit fills my life.

READ: Ephesians 5:18 “Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

- To keep close to God, I should be continually filled with and led by the Holy Spirit. What should be the results of being filled with God’s Spirit? (see vs. 19-20)

The Holy Spirit helps me to live in a way that honours God.

READ: Galatians 5:22 – 23

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”

- How have you seen God at work in your life recently to work in these ways?