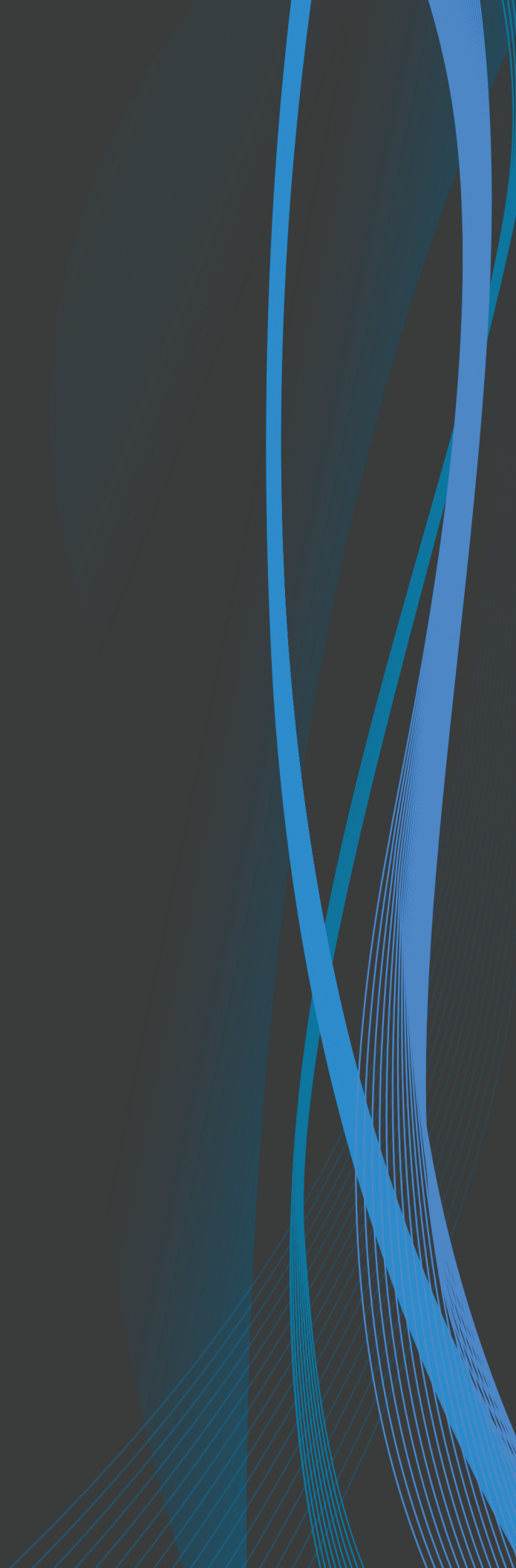




ONE Church • **ONE** Prayer • **ONE** Life

one

guidebook





ONE Church • ONE Prayer • ONE Life

NAME: _____

WAYNE + AMY BRAY



There is one body and one Spirit — just
as you were called to the one hope that
belongs to your call

– Ephesians 4:4

LEAD PASTOR

FIRST BAPTIST SIMPSONVILLE | UPSTATE CHURCH

ONE Church • ONE Prayer • ONE Life

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEAD PASTOR

Dear Church Family,

It has become increasingly more difficult to faithfully walk in the ways of our Lord in twenty-first century America. The enemy has constructed a scheme to discredit our testimony and dismantle our mission. What should we do? To whom can we turn for peace?

The Apostle Paul challenged believers “to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is ONE body...” (Ephesians 4:1-4)

We live in a time of great division and aggression. Still, God has not left us powerless in this troubled time. Yes - we acknowledge that Christ, Himself, is our ultimate strength, but He often provides us with that strength through other believers. We are ONE, and there is unmatched power in that word (Romans 12:3-8).

Sure, “ONE” is just a short 3-letter word, but it possesses endless possibilities for believers. **When the church is unified, the mission is maximized.**

Pastor Wayne Bray





1 CHURCH

5 CAMPUSES

What is

one?

what is one?

Merriam-Websters defines “ONE” as ...

- : constituting a unified entity of two or more components, (**Organizational**)
- : being the same in kind or quality; (**Practical**)
- : denoting unity; at harmony; (**Spiritual**)
- : being in a state of agreement; (**Missional**)

To say that First Baptist Simpsonville / Upstate Church (FBS/UC) is a unique church is an understatement. We have over 5,900 members. We meet in 11 separate gatherings at 5 different locations, with 4 distinct styles of worship, during a three-hour period each Sunday morning. In addition, we now have over 500 viewers joining us in worship online each Sunday. Your church family is shepherded by 20 ministers, 26 deacons, and over 70 small group leaders.

5 CAMPUSES • 11 SERVICES • 4 WORSHIP STYLES • 3 SERVICE TIMES

Our ministry and missional impact are broad, yet our **organizational** structure is cohesive. We are organizationally inseparable, unified in every legal sense of the term. We have one budget, by-laws, and identity. Still, our unity goes beyond our structure. We are **practically** unified. The marketing world would call it branding, but we just consider it our missional identity. Every FBS/UC campus possesses the same DNA, the same characteristics. We're not just related; we are united.

Above all other motivations, we recognize our unity comes from a **spiritual** mandate from God. Before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed for his followers. “Father, keep them in your name...that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:11). The call of unity is both a spiritual and **missional** expectation for the church. This is without question the will of Christ for His church, His hands, and feet in this world.

**WHEN THE CHURCH IS UNIFIED,
THE MISSION IS MAXIMIZED.**

What is one?

We believe this is a unique season of opportunity for our church as we seek to impact the Upstate for the glory of God. We are called to this Upstate mission as ONE Church. We share ONE prayer; “God, use us!” And we will each unconditionally devote the ONE life we have to give to leading others to the only One who is the giver of life, our Savior Jesus Christ.

It’s no secret; we have high expectations. We sense that God is preparing FBS/UC for an uncommon season of missional impact. The 2-year mission initiative will play a major role in that process. We will all be challenged to take our next step of commitment in our faith journey. The major giving component of the ONE initiative will be committed to our mission to reach the Upstate of SC.

MISSIONAL CHALLENGE: 3 MILLION OVER THE NEXT 24 MONTHS ABOVE REGULAR GIVING

Like the last two years of ALL IN, we will continue to focus on both local and foreign missions, making every effort to send more people on short-term mission trips than ever before. Still, we will do this while continuing to maintain our attention and investment in local ministry needs, church revitalizations, and other mission needs.

Our recent expansion from three to five campuses, and subsequent numeric growth, has shined a light on some obvious needs we will soon face as a church. The primary focus of the \$3 million challenge portion of the ONE Fund will be devoted toward making needed facilities improvements on all five campuses. This missional challenge will provide every campus with additional room for growth, while also building strength and stability that will inevitably lead to future expansion.

We are not asking for equal gifts, but equal sacrifice. This is a beautiful picture of the Body of Christ united as ONE. When the people are unified, the mission is maximized.

**Our 2021 gift to the International Mission Board (Lottie Moon Christmas Offering)
will be the largest in the history of our church.**

one church

We are better together, and that's why unity must be embraced now more than ever. Christians are surrounded by division on every side, and few people seem to even desire peace. Amid all these countless distractions, the church must stand united. Instead of building walls of isolation, we must build bridges of community. Therefore, we will intentionally provide opportunities for "cross-campus" unity in order to build stronger relationships within the body.

With our recent expansion from three to five campuses, we have an obvious need to stabilize and secure our infrastructure now. You've heard it said, "The sum of the whole is greater than its parts." The members of all five campuses will be challenged to come together to invest in the needs of the other locations. We **believe** in this vision, and we **believe** in each other.

Yes, we will commit to be promoters of and investors in unity. Why?
Because when the church is unified, the mission is maximized.



one prayer



While God has already been blessing FBS/UC, we believe He's just getting started. The Spirit is active and powerful, and we know that He can be trusted to finish what He started. So what's missing? In a word, "revival." No, we don't need more meetings; we need more surrender. We need a fresh wind from heaven. So, we will pray with one voice, "God, wake us up!" Our collective prayer will be one of desperation. Remember the words of Jesus, "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

We don't want to waste our lives, and we're willing to do anything it takes to see God work through His people in the Upstate. This is a dangerous prayer because it will require sacrifice in all areas of our lives. It forces us to ask ourselves, "How much are we really willing to surrender?" We **serve** and **give** because this is a calling worthy of our lives. God, use us!

We commit to surrender our time to serve, and we surrender our resources in giving. Why? Because when the church is unified, the mission is maximized.

one life

We only have one life to live. So, let's invest it in a cause worthy of our everything. It's easy to become so focused on the large crowds and the multiple campuses and lose sight of the importance of a single soul. Therefore, we will challenge every member of FBS/UC to identify ONE person he/she will pray for and invest in. We will ask this question often: "Who's your ONE?"

How far are we really willing to go? This will be a commitment to personal evangelism, asking God to help us see the lost with His eyes. Jesus has changed our lives, and we want others to experience His grace as well. We share the things that matter most with the people we love the most. This is why we must **go** and tell.



We will commit to bring our ONE to Jesus. Why?
When the church is unified, the mission is maximized.



church
prayer
life

expected outcomes

We believe God is going to turn our church **Inside Out** in 2022 while we unite to serve our community in incredible ways, **provide housing** for families in need, and mobilize over **150 first-time missionaries**. We are praying for **300 new believers** to follow Jesus in baptism. Can you imagine being a part of seeing God do the unthinkable within the next 24 months?

Think back to the amazing ways we have seen God show up over the past 2 years during ALL IN, even in the midst of a global pandemic! We're praying for more churches to be **planted**, and more to be **revitalized**. We desire to see people step into a **relationship with Christ**. We need to share Christ more with those around us. These are just a few of the things we're praying for. We know that God is faithful and able to do so much more than we expect or imagine.

There is no denying that God has already been doing amazing things through you, but we are asking you to believe God for more. Like never before, every member, in every service, on every campus, must come together as ONE.

- Inside Out Events
- 300 Baptisms
- Plant 6th & 7th Campuses
- Partner with 5 Church Planters
- Establish 2 New Revitalizations
- 150 First Time Short-Term Missionaries
- Provide Housing for Families in Need
- 20 New Home Groups
- Permanent Campus Facilities
- Ministry Residencies
- Cross-Campus Events
- Leadership Development

next steps

What is it going to take to be ONE?

Our goal is 100% participation!

BELIEVE

What we do flows from what we believe. Therefore, our first step in this journey is one of personal conviction. It's one thing to imagine that God can use you to accomplish supernatural things; it's another to believe He will. It's essential that everyone make the mission personal. God is going to use you. We are one body with many parts, but we must learn to value every part (Romans 12:3-8). This is a vision to believe in!

SERVE

The next step isn't easy because our flesh wants to be first. But Jesus taught us his paradoxical concept of serving in Mark 9:35. In order to be first, we must serve others. We should seek to do the things no one else is willing to do, serve in ways no one else is willing to serve. Why? We believe that we serve God by serving others. The goal of the whole is more important than the role of any one part. So, take your next step and step up to the plate. We need everyone on every campus, in every service, to serve regularly.

GIVE

We're never more like Jesus than when we're giving. Our Lord willingly laid down His life for us on the cross. Still, it's not easy to obey God in this area. The culture tells us to look out for ourselves and to concentrate primarily on what we want. We live in a self-centered day, when generosity is completely contrary to the culture. We are called to reach those who no one else is reaching, which will require that we do what no one else is doing. Perhaps the most challenging element involves our giving. Personal sacrifice is always a key measurement of our missional success. Taking this next step requires that we be willing to give what no one else is giving.

GO

Finally, we must be willing to go where no one else is going. You may be called to fly to the other side of the world, but your mission will likely begin by walking across the street. You are strategically positioned on a mission field in the Upstate of South Carolina. You are a missionary, and God has called you to go. This is not a step for pastors or deacons alone. Instead, this is the call of God for every believer. If you are following Jesus, you will be sharing the love of Jesus with others.

one commitment card

We are going to start seeing double, as we think in terms of this 2-year initiative. Our goals for believe, serve, give, and go will all be 2-year goals. This will include all the things we've grown to love about our church, but it will also move us into a new season of missional purpose and future impact.

FIRST BAPTIST SIMPSONVILLE | UPSTATE CHURCH \$16,400,000

ONE INITIATIVE 24-MONTH COMMITMENT

NUMBER OF GIFTS	AMOUNT OF EACH GIFT	TOTALS
1	750,000	750,000
1	500,000	500,000
3	250,000	750,000
13	100,000	1,300,000
13	80,000	1,040,000
13	65,000	845,000
20	50,000	1,000,000
95	25,000	2,375,000
77	20,000	1,540,000
80	15,000	1,200,000
200	10,000	2,000,000
200	7,000	1,400,000
200	5,000	1,000,000
200	2,000	4,00,000
300	1,000	3,000,000
		16,400,000



Commitments

☐ I/We commit to ONE Church. I/We commit to the unity of First Baptist Simpsonville | Upstate Church, to be ONE with our multi-generational, multi-site church.

☐ I/We commit to ONE Prayer. I/We commit for God to use us at First Baptist Simpsonville | Upstate Church. I/We will use our talents and gifts to further His mission in the Upstate.

\$_____ My/Our Current Annual Giving the past 24 months of 2020-2021

\$_____ My/Our New Annual Giving for next 24 months of 2022-2023*

(*include any anticipated extra gifts above and beyond commitment above)

\$_____ One time gift above New Annual Giving

☐ I/We commit to ONE Life. I/We commit to bring others to Christ through prayer and intentional relationships. My/Our ONE is _____.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

This financial amount is your commitment to give and can change at any time. Your financial gifts and commitments are always kept in complete confidence.



Matt and Jessica Lippert Caroline & Elisabeth

Why we believe

The multi-campus/one church environment has been amazing for our family! We are all able to worship and hear messages from different pastors, but are able to regroup and connect after services and share our takeaways from the same teachings and messages.

Matt and I moved from the Downtown Campus to the Five Forks Campus when it opened and have really been able to plug in there as we serve on several teams at this campus.

Caroline is on the worship team serving at all campuses and attends the Anderson campus with her friends while attending Anderson University. Elisabeth enjoys her small group that she has been a part of for years at the downtown campus and has really found her core group of friends through the Downtown Student Ministry.

While we all worship at different campuses, we truly **believe** we are part of ONE church.



Elizabeth Ericksen

Why we serve

As a young woman, I was free to travel to Brazil on an amazing mission trip. I learned so much about myself and how to share the gospel. I wanted to continue to travel to other countries on mission.

But, time flew by and before I knew it, I was blessed with a wonderful husband and 3 kids! Traveling was no longer an option for me. I recall complaining to a senior church member, Mrs. Deb Jolly, about how I want to travel on missions, but just can't. Mrs. Jolly was a sweet old friend who took the time to teach me what the "mission field" really is. She said, "you don't have to travel far to serve God. Your mission can be right in your backyard". She explained to me that your first mission is your home. Focus on teaching and guiding your children to know God and to choose God. Your next mission field is in the church. She recommended that I find a place to serve in the church where I can help others and find joy. It took some time to find my place but once I started to keep the toddlers, I knew this is my mission field.

I get to **serve** God and show his love by providing the children with a smile and a hug. This gives them a sense of security and a visual demonstration of God's love for them. They will carry this with them as they become a teen and an adult. They may not remember me as their teacher, but they will remember that the church is where they can find God's love.



Russell and Stefanie Lamoy

Why we give

Being an active member in our local church has always been who we are as a couple and family. Russell was actively serving as an audio technician at Disciple Now and I (Stefanie) was leading the middle school girls and that's how we met! He has always had a passion for serving through the audio/visual ministries and I love working with children. Also, we were one of the three couples to start the Explore God group. We enjoy giving our time as part of the body of Christ and it's an honor to serve and help spread the gospel!

As a young couple, consistent giving was a struggle, but for us, it was important to be obedient and **give** from our hearts. In 2019, Russell was laid off for nearly 6 months. There was never a question that we would continue to give, and we did, even though we had no income! We continued to trust God and knew that he would provide for us. It was difficult at the time to see the plan God had but we continued to pray that he would provide, all while continuing to be obedient and give. The blessings we have been given are beyond measure and God saw us through those 6 months and provided us with a better job and more time together as a family.

We find it important to raise our children in a home that puts God first and models serving and giving. We feel so blessed to be parents and we strive to raise our children according to the Word. At times we fall short, but we continue to try our best. We know if we continue to lean on the Lord things will ultimately be good. "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)



Tim Gantz

Why we go

In May of 2019 I moved to Greenville, South Carolina. I lived at Triple Tree Aerodrome down on Woodruff for the first three months I was here. A good friend of mine, Eddie Capps, kept asking me to come to church with him. So, in July I came to my first service at First Baptist Simpsonville/Upstate Church. I was impressed with all the technology and I kept coming back for weeks on end listening to the message of Wayne Bray and being blown away. Every week I left the church in tears crying because of the guilt I had for not knowing the love Jesus had for me. Hearing His word as Wayne delivered it really hit home.

My day-to-day life up to this point has been revolving around alcohol and substance abuse. My day to day life consisted of trying to fill that empty hole with alcohol and I could never fill it. Near the end of July 2019, I prayed that God would take that away from me and He did. I haven't had alcohol or drugs in two years! I thank God for that every day!

On September 15, 2019, I attended a Getting To Know You Event and sat at a table with Wes and Jana Walker. Wes and I started talking about the Lord and my salvation. "Have you ever been saved?" he asked. My response was, any time I considered giving my life to Christ there was always some underlying circumstance and I never felt it was a true acceptance of Christ into my life. Wes asked me what I like to accept Jesus into my life and I said yes! And since that day my life has been full of joy and happiness.

My day-to-day life now consists of driving uber and sharing my story of salvation with college kids in Clemson. I **go** and I hand out invitation cards to as many customers as I can. I used to judge a day by how much money I made, but now I judge it by how many good conversations about Jesus I get to have and how many invitation cards I hand out.

Since giving my life to Jesus I have gotten very involved with serving in production at the church and that hole that's in my heart Jesus has filled with joy and love. I never knew I was so loved and that I could be so fulfilled and care so much about others I come in contact with. The family I have made at First Baptist Simpsonville/Upstate Church has changed my life.

The outreach and love they show me week in and week out is incredible. I never knew that there was so much love in a church of strangers that I now call my family!



ONE Church • **ONE** Prayer • **ONE** Life

message guide intro

EPHESIANS 4:4

“THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT - JUST AS YOU WERE CALLED TO THE ONE HOPE THAT BELONGS TO YOUR CALL.”

During this 3-week journey, how will God speak to you? How do we respond to ONE? What can we do together above and beyond our human expectations?

We invite you to follow along with our Sermon Guide, to take notes, and reflect on each week's teaching. If you miss a week, catch up by watching the campus messages on our website, fbsimpsonville.org/watch.

CONSIDER the scripture and the notes.

Then, APPLY what you've read; ask “How does this apply to me and my family in this season of our church?”

And most importantly, PRAY and listen. Be still for a few minutes. It's OK to turn everything off.

To go deeper each week, we encourage you to plug into a group and participate in the Group Guide section. You can also complete the group guide section as a family or by yourself, if desired. If you have any questions about finding a group, please contact Dallas Wilson, grouplife@fbsimpsonville.org, or stop by the Information Kiosk at any of our campuses to find a group.

Above all, we encourage you to seek God through this process. Enjoy the journey!



Lined writing area consisting of 25 horizontal lines.

1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

Isaiah’s Commission from the Lord

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

WHEN WE SEE WHO GOD REALLY IS, WE SURRENDER EVERYTHING.

God Open Our _____.

God Forgive Our _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.
2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door.
And he was preaching the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried
by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed
the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which
the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are
forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why
does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 And
immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said
to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the
paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you
may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—
11 "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." 12 And he rose and immediately picked up
his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying,
"We never saw anything like this!"

Acknowledge the _____.

Expect _____.

Do _____ It Takes.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

GROUP GUIDE

SCRIPTURE TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:1-16 - PRE-GROUP

STUDY

Before interacting with this guide, all leaders and group members should study the referenced text using the HEAR Method.

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.

Study Question:

1. What are the character traits that Paul mentions in v.1-3 that are necessary in order to walk in a manner worthy of our calling?
2. Everyone has been given a gift for the building of Christ's body. What is yours?
 *** If you do not know your spiritual gifts, you can take an assessment here:
<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service> ***
1. Paul says that a church walking in unity and using its gifts builds mature believers. What are some of the signs of a mature believer?

Group Lesson

Main Idea:

We are one. Though we may be from different backgrounds, and meet at different times, with different worship styles, and in different locations, we are one church and we are called to walk in unity.

Introduction:

Have you ever noticed that on every American dollar is the inscription, "E pluribus unum?"

The motto means "out of many, one." Out of many different states and many different people comes one nation.

The motto challenges us to realize that our strength as a nation comes when different people from different backgrounds join together for one common purpose. Unity in mission and vision, not uniformity in appearance, is the foundation of the American ideal.

The same is true of the church. We are many, many different people, many different ages, many different races, many different backgrounds. However, we are joined together under one Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, and one calling, taking Jesus Christ to the Upstate and the world.

Understanding

Read: Ephesians 4:1-16

One Bible scholar says of this passage, “No passage is more descriptive of the church in action.” In other words, what we have here is a picture of a healthy church.

One of the main traits of a healthy church that is obvious from the passage is unity.

Unity: the state of being united or joined as a whole.

Healthy unity is not an artificial or forced unity. Healthy unity is not uniformity that minimizes diversity or differences. Healthy unity is when multiple people are made one because of a common relationship or purpose. It’s a unity built on a common foundation.

We are unified by the same calling. (V.1)

Paul urges believers to walk worthy of the calling which they received. The calling that we’ve all received is the calling of salvation and the calling to live to tell the world about our Savior.

The foundation of Christian unity is our common relationship to Jesus Christ and our common mission for Jesus.

How does our relationship with Jesus and our mission for Jesus unite us together despite our differences?

How does disunity distract us from the mission that Jesus has called us to? What are some examples you have seen about how disunity has prevented the mission from going forward?

We are unified by the same beliefs (V. 4-6)

Paul also builds a case for the church's unity around the common beliefs.

What are some of the beliefs that he lists that are the foundation of our unity?

The beliefs that Paul lists are the core beliefs of the Christian faith. They give us unity about the most foundational things in life.

How do common foundational beliefs give us unity with someone even if we have nothing else in common with them?

Everyone has something to contribute. (V.7-12)

The church is one, but it's made up of many different parts, many different people. Paul wants every believer to know that they have something to contribute to the church and its mission.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Unity is not possible without everyone contributing.
Passivity kills unity because it keeps everyone from answering the call of Christ.
Unity comes when everyone participates with the same purpose.

Application

If we are going to be a unified church, we are going to have to live like Jesus.

Read Ephesians 4:1-3 again. What are some of the character traits that Paul says we need if we are to walk in unity? Who is a good example of someone who embodies these characteristics?

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Have I been walking “eager to maintain unity” in the church?
2. Is there a place in the church that I am being called to contribute that I haven’t yet?
3. Have I been guilty of placing personal preference over unity in purpose?

Prayer

Close your group in prayer. Ask God to make us a church that walks in unity and pursues his mission with passion.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ISAIAH 6:1-8 - PRE-GROUP

STUDY

Before interacting with this guide, all leaders and group members should study the referenced text using the HEAR Method.

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
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- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.

Study Question:

1. What are some of the main things you notice about God in this text? How does it move you to worship?
2. What does Isaiah's response to seeing God in his holiness teach us about ourselves?
3. God removes Isaiah's sin. What does that teach us about the gospel?
4. In response to God's mercy, Isaiah is eager to minister. Has this been true in your own life in response to God's mercy?

Group Lesson

Main Idea:

When people meet God and are forgiven by God they become passionate about being used by God.

Introduction:

I once read a story about Kobe Bryant's passion for basketball. Evidently, his love of the game made him do some pretty obsessive things, like show up to practice at 4 A.M. and make teammates play one-on-one games to 100.

I was struck by how passion leads to a desire to act, to work, to be "in the game" so to speak.

Who is the most passionate person you know? What are they passionate about?

How does it show up in their life?

Passion leads to action. There is no way around it. God is calling our church to be passionate people who act for His glory.

When it comes to scripture, we see an example of this passion in the prophet Isaiah.

Understanding

Read: Isaiah 6:1-8

Isaiah shows us that the foundation for Christian passion and Christian action is the glory of God and the grace of God. When people see God's glory and God's grace, they become passionate to live lives sold out for Him.

Isaiah had an experience with God that few people ever have this side of heaven. He saw God in all his glory.

What are some of the attributes of God that Isaiah lists?

The main attribute that Isaiah relays to us is God's holiness.

That God is holy means that he is completely set apart from us, completely different than us. This doesn't mean that he is unknowable to us. It means that he is not like us. He is pure and we are not. He is sinless and we are not. He is good and we are not. He is whole and we are not.

The most important take away from Isaiah's description of God is that we serve a big God. God cannot be reduced to deserving only a part of our life.

This God that Isaiah describes is worthy of the entirety of our lives.

When we settle for a small idea of God, we are content to give Him the bits and pieces of our lives. Isaiah will not let us settle for such an understanding of God.

In what ways have you settled for a small view of God? How has that impacted your passion for God?

In what ways does this passage move you to worship God? How does worship make us passionate about being used for Jesus?

God's glory moves us to live lives centered around Him.

When we see who God is, our prayer becomes, "God, use me."

Isaiah not only experienced God's glory. He experienced God's grace in a radical way. Notice Isaiah's response to God's glory in v. 5. Why do you think his response is so dramatic?

Isaiah is convinced that he is about to die because he is a sinful man in the presence of God. Yet, God does the unimaginable. He takes his sins away. In Isaiah we have a perfect illustration of the gospel. A sinful man stands before a holy God. Then, the holy God does what the sinful man could never do for himself. He takes away his sin. This is God's grace.

"When we understand the character of God, when we grasp something of His holiness, then we begin to understand the radical character of our sin and hopelessness. Helpless sinners can survive only by grace. Our strength is futile in itself; we are spiritually impotent without the assistance of a merciful God. The hands of God are gracious hands.

They alone have the power to rescue us from certain destruction." -RC. Sproul

God's grace moves us to live lives centered around him.

When we see how God loves us, our prayer becomes, "God, use me."

Read Isaiah 6:8.

All of this results in Isaiah longing to be used by God. People who have encountered God's glory and God's grace long to be used for God's mission.

Application

Read Acts 20:22-24

What does Paul consider his main goal in life? How can we make our main goal in life living for Christ's mission?

-C.T. Studd

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Can I honestly say that I want God to use me?
2. Have I been more concerned about what I can get from God instead of how I can serve God?
3. Have I ever experienced God's grace and glory like Isaiah?

Prayer

Close the group in prayer focusing on the reality that we all only have one life to give Christ.

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SCRIPTURE TEXT: MARK 2:1-12 - PRE-GROUP

STUDY

Before interacting with this guide, all leaders and group members should study the referenced text using the HEAR Method.

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.

Study Question:

1. In this passage four friends are passionate about bringing their friend to Jesus for healing. Who are the people in your life that God intends for you to bring to Jesus?
2. What does this passage teach about Jesus and his authority?
3. The friends and the paralytic were seeking physical healing. How did Jesus meet their expectations and go past them?

Group Lesson

Main Idea:

Knowing Jesus, and knowing what he has done for us, leads us to be passionate about bringing other people to know Jesus.

Introduction:

When is the last time you had a conversation about Jesus with someone who was not a church member? Chances are it's been a while. Although Christianity is a faith that was built on Christians going into a hostile world and telling others about Jesus, it would appear that the practice of evangelism is a way of the past for many Christians.

One recent study among churchgoers (people who attend church one or more times a month) showed that 80% believed that it was a Christian mandate to share their faith. Nevertheless 61% of those surveyed had not shared their faith in the past 6 months.

What does this mean? It means we have an evangelism problem. We have the best news in all the world and churches full of people who don't talk about it.

At the end of the day, the biggest obstacle to evangelism is Christians who don't share the gospel. – Albert Mohler

Understanding

Read: Mark 2:1-12

Isn't it funny how Jesus offers so much more than what these five men were looking for? The four friends and the handicapped man came to Jesus looking for some physical healing, which isn't a bad thing. They just had no idea that Jesus offers so much more.

Instead of Jesus healing this man's physical ailment only, he says, "your sins are forgiven."

Why do you think that he does that?

Ultimately, Jesus is here to show everyone involved that He has come to not just fix the external. He has come to make all things new, and that starts with forgiveness of sins, not the mending of bones.

The handicapped man had a need bigger than physical healing and he didn't even know it. How do we show people that their biggest need in life is God's forgiveness?

Jesus' offer of forgiveness and eternal life becomes clear in this passage. What may go unnoticed is our obligation to those in need of what Jesus offers. Our obligation is summed up by the handicapped man's four friends. These four men had every reason to give up on their mission. The house was full. There was no way they were getting to Jesus. They didn't give up. They resulted to a little destruction of property and did whatever it took to get people to Jesus.

What do these four men show us that our obligation is to people who need Jesus?

Read Romans 1:14-15

Paul says that he is obligated to preach the gospel. Why is he obligated? Because he has the good news that everyone else needs.

The obligation Paul has in mind is of a doctor to a sick person. The doctor is obligated to seek the cure that the patient needs. Those of us who have the gospel are spiritual doctors. Those without Jesus are the spiritually sick. We have the cure, and we are obligated to give it to them.

Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ, if sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies; and if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay, and not madly to destroy themselves. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.

- Charles Spurgeon

Application

Part of the ONE initiative is everyone picking one person to pray for and commit to telling about Jesus. WHO'S YOUR ONE?

What is it that keeps you from sharing the gospel more faithfully?

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Have I been complacent about telling people about Jesus and his salvation?
2. When is the last time that I prayed for someone who is lost?
3. When is the last time I told someone about Jesus?

Prayer

Close the group in prayer asking God to break our hearts for the lost people in our lives.

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