

# SOUTHRIDGE CHURCH

STUDY GUIDE: January 24, 2010



To Jesus, though God could be found in a walk in the woods or in a good book, He is most often encountered in the Church. Unfortunately, for many the Church is a building, a physical place. To Jesus, the Kingdom (presence and power) of God is “among you” at work in the presence and power of His people gathered together as a community living in community. God is wherever two or three of Jesus’ followers are gathered. While God can be found in a building or a place, to Jesus the Church, the place to meet with God is the community of those who love Him and live for His purpose.

In your own way and at your own pace, please freely explore the follow up questions, Bible study materials, daily Bible reading suggestions, spiritual exercises and other resources listed here to take this conversation to the next level in your life. Use a journal or take advantage of the community with which God has surrounded you (including your family!) to work through what you find here. This resource is for you. It is an invitation to take the conversation beyond Sundays and to make it a 24/7 reality in your life. Enjoy!

## GOING DEEPER:

1. How would you have defined “church” growing up? Given that the word “church” is only ever used in the Bible to describe the community, how or why do so many people develop the perception that “church” is a building? What could the church do or change to help people understand that the true “church” is the community and not a place?
2. Read **Genesis 1:26-28**. Reflect on what it means to be “created in the image and likeness of God”. What does that suggest to you about humanity? Do you believe that community is essential to experiencing and expressing God’s image? Why or why not? In what ways have you seen that to be true in your experience? In what ways do you wish it was more true in you?
3. Read **1 Thessalonians 2:7b-8**. Who do you know what has been this person in your life (a significant relationship where you’ve encountered God)? How have you encountered God through that person? How has your life with God grown because of their influence? How could you emulate their impact on you in your impact on others?
4. Everyone has different needs when it comes to the community (though everyone needs community). Are you more of an introvert or an extrovert? How’s your balance between encountering God in community and taking time to be alone with God? In what ways could you change the way you “do relationships” in order to better experience or encounter God, both in community and individually?
5. Take some time as a group to encourage each other with how you see God in each other or what God has taught you through each other. This could be written, as each person writes a short note to everyone else (e.g. on “Thank You” cards being passed around the circle), or verbally (e.g. as each person affirms the person to their left).



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WEEK FOUR: WHERE?

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## BIBLE STUDY:

**Read Colossians 3:5-11.** (remember to use two or three different translations, if possible. Maybe look at a version you don't usually look at - New American Standard or the New King James).

Phil Steiger writes: "This section of Colossians 3 is really rather straightforward. Paul tells believers that because they are now children of God and no longer children of this world, their lives need to reflect that change. The way The Message puts the first verse is enlightening:

***'So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ , act like it.'***

What follows is Paul's description of a Christian life; it is the kind of life that is progressing in one direction, constantly dawning new attitudes and behaviors and continually rejecting others. We should keep in mind as we read these lists that they are not academic exercises for Paul, instead, they flow from the habits and experiences of his own life. Though far from perfect, Paul lived a life shaped by spiritual disciplines that reflected the kind of life Jesus lived while here on earth. Paul does not hope the Colossians can be a little bit like the believer described in this passage, he knows they can be and he expects them to be."

### **Review the following questions:**

1. Living a Christian life can be a daunting challenge (in 1 Peter it's clear that it's not a "walk in the park".) In previous sermon series (Faith @ and 24/7), we have been challenged to develop our spiritual disciplines to develop our character.
  - a. Are you using the aids provided in this Study Guide? Why or why not? What's helped and what's not?
  - b. What daily or weekly disciplines have you found most helpful for addressing issues of character in your life? What could you recommend to others?
  - c. What disciplines would you like to try to incorporate into your life with God? How could you do that?
  
2. Verses 9-10 read (in The Message) "You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe." What does your new wardrobe look like?
  - a. What character issues (even from this list) has God been addressing in your life lately? How has he been drawing your attention to them?
  - b. Where have you seen the most character change in the last little while? How has that made a difference in your relationships with others (and in how others "get a sense of what God is like" from your life?

### **Read Galations 5:13-23.**

In an article entitled *Freedom in Christ Means Freedom to Serve Others*, Steve Lewis writes: "The 'fruit of the Spirit' can be viewed as a cluster of attributes whose primary characteristics is love.

**Bible Study continued on next page....**



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## BIBLE STUDY CONTINUED...

The love of God expresses itself in many other qualities, including joy and peace in the midst of trial, patience under stress, kindness and goodness toward others (particularly those who oppose us), faithfulness to God and to our commitments, gentleness/meekness and self control (specially exercising control over our fleshly tendencies)...These qualities characterize God Himself, and He desires that those who belong to Him should become more and more like Him as His Spirit works in the new nature.

### **Review the following questions:**

1. Mike Krause notes that the answer to the question “Where can I discover God?” is “in community” - but only if we are the kind of community that is reflective of the heart of God.
  - a. Do we demonstrate the “fruit of the Spirit” as a community (think of life group, your friendship circle, your family, or our church)? What can we do better (both individually and corporately)?
  - b. What could we do to address that issue?
  
2. Warren Wiersbe writes: “Life, not law, changes behavior; and as you yield to the Spirit, Christ’s life is manifest in the fruit of the Spirit.”
  - a. What do you need to “yield to the Spirit?” What, practically, does it look like to “yield to the Spirit”?
  - b. What makes it hard to “yield to the Spirit”? What prevents us from doing so?

### **NEW TO THE BIBLE**

Those who are new to reading the Bible may want to explore some of the ideas and suggestions on our website.

[CLICK HERE](#)

**DAILY READING TEXTS:** During the course of the “Q” series our community is going to journey through a 7 week encounter with the entire Bible. These 42 readings provide an overview of the message of the Bible and even though some are longer, none should take more than 10-15 minutes. The reward will be well worth the effort. So dive in and discover God’s Story!

DAY	THEME	TEXT
Monday	Israel’s Ongoing Battle With Unfaithfulness	1 Kings 18:16-19:18
Tuesday	God’s Punishment For Unfaithfulness	1 Kings 17:1-41; 25:1-30
Wednesday	Rebuilding After The Exile (Temple)	Ezra 1:1-11; 6:1-22
Thursday	Rebuilding After The Exile (Jerusalem)	Nehemiah 2:1-20; 6:1-19
Friday	The Ultimate Saviour (Messiah)	Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Saturday	Jesus, The Saviour Is Born	Matthew 1:18-2:23; Luke 2:1-52
Sunday	The Teachings Of Jesus	Matthew 5:1-7:29



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## SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

- ✓ Read **Colossians 3:11** and **Revelation 7:9-12**. Part of reflecting God's image in community involves unity amid diversity, men and women of all ages from a variety of ethnicities, cultures, languages, educational and religious backgrounds loving and learning from each other. Host a dinner party in which your guest list is as diverse as possible to include all kinds of people God loves.
  
- ✓ What do you talk about when you 'have people over'? What topics are the norm? Challenge yourself to be more intentional about your conversation in community. The next time you are with your friends or family, come prepared with one question to start a conversation that would invite God-talk into your community experience.
  
- ✓ Encouragement is an important part of building community that reflects God's image. This week take the time to honour the investment others have made in you. Choose one relationship that has had a significant impact on you. Write a quick note to that person detailing the ways God used them in your life and how they've made a difference in you.

## RESOURCES:

[Ragamuffin Gospel, Brennan Manning](#)

[Everybody's Normal Till You Get To Know Them, John Ortberg](#)

[Sacred Companions, David G. Brenner](#)

[Community and Growth, Jean Vanier](#)

[Becoming Human, Jean Vanier](#)

[Faith@Starbucks, Ben Lockyer](#)