



# Discipleship & Values



**LIFE GROUPS**

WOODSIDE BIBLE CHURCH



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# Discipleship & Values

## INTRODUCTION

# What is a Disciple?

When you hear the word disciple, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

## DISCIPLE

A disciple is a person who, through faith, has received a new identity from God through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We become disciples by believing the Gospel. The word Gospel means good news. Specifically, the Gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ: His life, death, and resurrection has secured our salvation and reconciled us to God. Becoming a disciple not only allows us to look forward to an eternity with God, but also to experience the power and direction of God in our everyday lives as we follow Jesus. You can become a disciple by surrendering your life to Jesus and asking Him to be your Savior.

## WE ARE A PEOPLE

A disciple is an individual who is following Jesus while being part of a community that belongs to God.

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

—1 Peter 2:9-10

This passage refers to all believers everywhere throughout history. Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, every disciple, by grace through faith, is brought from death to life (Eph. 2) and becomes a member of God's people.

At Woodside, we are a part of this people! We are a local, visible representation of God's Kingdom in Southeast Michigan.

## Discuss

**We often have an individualized perspective on being a disciple. How does having an identity as “a people” challenge cultural norms?**

## WOODSIDE'S DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

Every action we take is the expression of an identity, whether it be the new identity we have in Christ or our old identity, which was anchored in our accomplishments or things that had happened to us.



We believe that all humans, regardless of their faith, express their identity in three main ways: through **worship, community, and mission**. For instance, a person who gains their identity from their job may express worship towards money, seek community with those who can help them advance their career, and engage in the mission of accomplishing all their goals and dreams. A person who gets their identity from being a parent may worship the comfort of their children, find community with other parents, and live on mission to raise a successful child.

## Discuss

**Who are you? What does your response tell you about where you find your identity? What effects do you see in your life when you start to find your identity in appearance, success, freedom, relationships, or other things?**

As Disciples of Jesus, we're learning what it means to live out of our new identity—which has been secured through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. A disciple expresses this identity in three ways: toward God through **WORSHIP**, with the Church through **COMMUNITY**, and with the world through **MISSION**.

These expressions of identity are critical to being a healthy disciple. Consider a three-legged stool with only one or two legs—it's unstable and not fully fulfilling its purpose. Similarly, if one of these expressions is missing, you are not experiencing the fullness of being a disciple of Jesus.



EXPRESSING  
OUR IDENTITY  
TOWARDS  
GOD IN...



*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

— Romans 12:1-2

Now that Jesus has transformed us and made us holy before the Father, we're called to live our entire lives as expressions of worship to God.

## **WHAT IS WORSHIP?**

Worship is the acknowledgement and praise of God's character, glory, power, actions, and being. True worship of God leads to great joy in the life of a believer.

## **HOW DO WE EXPRESS OUR IDENTITY TOWARD GOD IN WORSHIP?**

We're called to worship God with our whole lives. There are many ways we can do that, both individually and as a Life Group! Some examples include:

- 1 Singing (Psalm 96:1-2, 1 Chronicles 16:9)
- 2 Spending time with God (Hebrews 4:16)
- 3 Rejoicing and giving thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
- 4 Sharing the Gospel (Romans 15:15-17)
- 5 Considering the works and creation of God (Psalm 19:1)

## **Discuss**

**What are the primary ways you worship God? Are there any areas that you'd like to explore as additional expressions of worship?**

**In the following sections, we'll discuss how to worship God as a Life Group.**

EXPRESSING  
OUR IDENTITY  
TOWARD  
THE CHURCH  
THROUGH...



*Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

— Acts 4:32-37

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

We are the body of Christ created in the image of God, who exists in community with the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have eternally existed in relationship with one another as one God in three persons. God is a relational being. He created us as relational beings so that we might reflect His image. Living in community with a local church and a Life Group reflects the nature of God and brings life to the believer.

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It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God's Word and sacrament [baptism and communion]. Not all Christians receive this blessing. The imprisoned, the sick, the scattered, the lonely, and the proclaimers of the Gospel in heathen lands stand alone. They know that visible fellowship is a blessing.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## HOW DO WE EXPRESS OUR IDENTITY TOWARD THE CHURCH THROUGH COMMUNITY?

As a community, we reflect the goodness of God and preach the Gospel with our lives. Some examples of living life in community include, but aren't limited to:

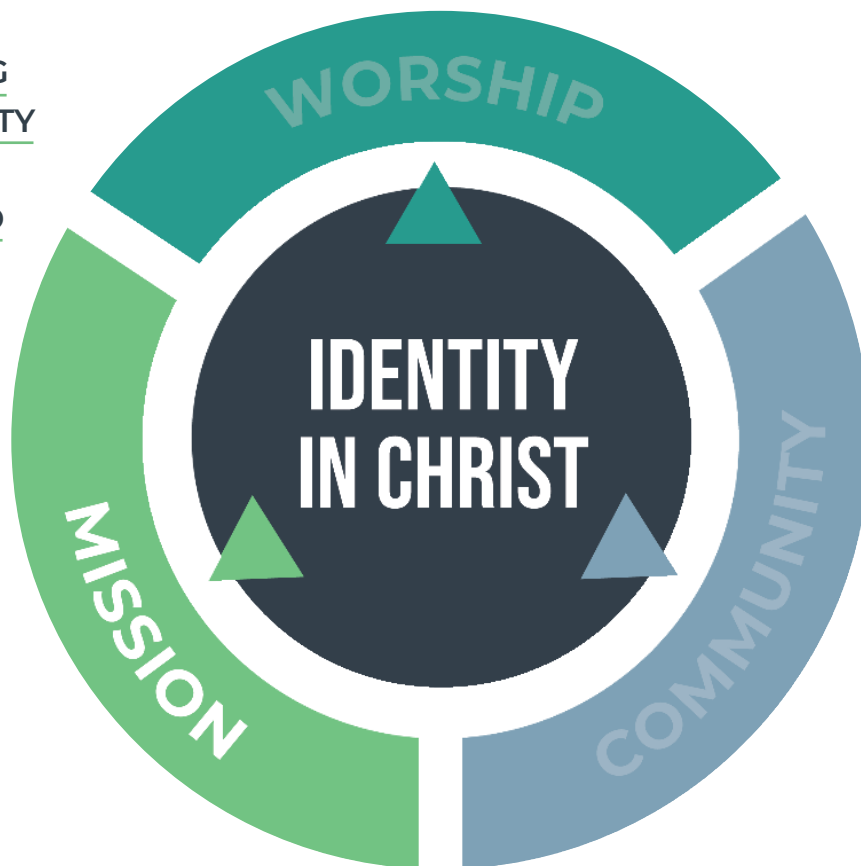
- 1 Caring for other believers (Matthew 25:40)
- 2 Bearing each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- 3 Loving each other (John 13:34-35)
- 4 Sharing meals together (Acts 2:46)
- 5 Confessing sin to each other (James 5:16)

### Discuss

**What are the primary ways your Life Group expresses community toward the Church? In which areas could you grow as a community?**

**In the following sections, we'll look at how your Life Group can experience community in and with the Church together.**

EXPRESSING  
OUR IDENTITY  
TOWARD  
THE WORLD  
THROUGH...



*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

— Matthew 28:18-20

God the Father sent his Son, Jesus, into human history to reconcile us to Himself. Jesus also sends the Spirit to us as we engage in His mission. Therefore, we are missionaries created in the image of a sent and sending God (John 17:18).

## WHAT IS MISSION?

Mission is the acknowledgement of and participation in the work of God—His redemption and restoration through the Gospel. As a community, we're called to live lives that reflect God's goodness, mercy, and grace in ways that show the world around us the saving and transforming love and power of Jesus Christ.



**The mission of Jesus is yours to participate in. It has always been God's intention to choose normal, everyday people, and show His amazing power and glory through them. He's not looking for the most impressive person because He already is that person.**

**- Jeff Vanderstelt**

## HOW DO WE EXPRESS OUR IDENTITY TOWARD THE WORLD THROUGH MISSION?

We're called to live our lives intentionally and missionally—not only loving our brothers and sisters in the Church, but also engaging with and loving our neighbors in the world. We do this because Jesus commanded us in His authority to GO so that our neighbors might see the glory of God and be stirred to answer God's call for their own salvation.

We're called to engage in God's mission personally and as a community. Some examples we see of mission in the Bible include:

- 1 Sharing the Gospel (Mark 16:15)
- 2 Loving each other well around non-believers (John 13:35)
- 3 Meeting practical physical needs (Matthew 15:32)
- 4 Engaging in new activities as we find common ground (1 Corinthians 9:22)
- 5 Caring for orphans and widows (James 1:27)

### Discuss

**What are the primary ways your Life Group expresses your identity toward the world through mission?**

**In the following sections, we'll look at other ways your Life Group can express your identity toward the world through mission.**

## OUR LIFE GROUP

Now that you've had the chance to explore Woodside's discipleship model and discuss how your Life Group is expressing...

**IDENTITY** toward God through **WORSHIP**,  
**IDENTITY** toward the church through **COMMUNITY**,  
and **IDENTITY** toward the world through **MISSION**,

...it's time to assess how well you're balancing all three.



### Discuss

As a group, take a few moments to discuss how thoroughly you engage in worship, community, and mission. Remember the earlier analogy of the three-legged stool? Is your stool lopsided?

Over the next few weeks, you'll be learning what it looks like to express your identity in Christ through the lens of Woodside's core values.

## **OUR VALUES**

At Woodside, we're guided by a set of core values that shape how we express what it means to be a new creation in Christ. These values form the foundation upon which we build our spiritual family as an expression of God's love. This means that each expression of our identity in Christ has components of truth, goodness, and beauty challenging us to engage our heads, hearts, and hands as disciples of Jesus.

**Truth: We love and proclaim God's truth.**

**Goodness: We receive and respond to God's goodness.**

**Beauty: We enjoy and create as a reflection of God's beauty.**

As we look closer at truth, goodness, and beauty, we'll explore how to incorporate each of them as you express your identity towards God in worship, toward the Church in community, and toward the world through mission. During this study, your group will have the opportunity to grow in the area(s) that may be like a missing leg of the stool. We hope you'll learn how to live a balanced life of worship, community, and mission as disciples!



Value One

# TRUTH:

We love and  
proclaim  
God's truth.

When you hear the word **truth**, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

## WHAT IS TRUTH?

That which communicates the reality of God.

## WHERE IS TRUTH FOUND?

God Himself, the creator of the universe, makes Himself known through His word.

*For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (He is God!), who formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create it empty, He formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the Lord, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right.*

— Isaiah 45:18-19

The Word of the Lord is truth, and Jesus Himself is the Word of God (John 1:1). He is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15) and made a way for us to know God personally.

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.*

— John 14:6

God's Word is tied to the Gospel. Part of speaking truth is declaring the Gospel that has given us a new identity and is secured through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

## Question

**In a world where truth is thought to be subjective (based on personal opinion) instead of objective (based on verifiable facts), what challenges do we encounter when we hold to the Word of God as objective truth?**

### WE LOVE GOD'S TRUTH

*So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples."*

— John 8:31

We love God because He first loved us (John 4:19). The Gospel compels us to love God's truth and abide in it, so that we might know God more fully and be transformed into the likeness of His Son.

Let's look at how God uses His Word in our lives as His disciples:

Read Psalm 19:7-11 (ESV), underlining the things that stand out about God's Word:

*The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

## Question

**Based on the above passage, what does God's truth provide?**

WE  
PROCLAIM  
GOD'S  
TRUTH

As we abide in God's truth, the Holy Spirit works through the Word, transforming our minds, hearts, souls, and actions to be conformed to the image of Christ.

We can proclaim God's truth to the people around us through our words and actions.

*Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit.*

— *Proverbs 12:17*

Proclaiming truth with our words doesn't just mean quoting Scripture; it also includes communicating honestly with one another. When we speak truthfully to one another with love and compassion, we stand out in a world where dishonesty is widely accepted as a necessary means for personal gain or keeping peace.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV) and fill in the missing words:

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable  
for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_,  
and for \_\_\_\_\_, that the man of God may be  
complete, equipped for every good work.*

The Scriptures show us how to live according to God's standards, which is a counter-cultural way of life:

- 1 Forgiving over and over again (Matthew 18:21-22)
- 2 Living a life of radical generosity (Acts 4:34-35)
- 3 Not seeking revenge for evil (Romans 12:17-21)
- 4 Putting others before yourself (Philippians 2:3)

When we live according to God's instructions, our lives proclaim God's truth.

## Discuss

**Which do you find more challenging, proclaiming truth with your words or your actions? Discuss ways you can improve in the area you find most challenging.**

Let's explore how loving and proclaiming God's truth helps us express our identity in Christ toward God through worship, our identity toward the Church through community, and our identity toward the world through mission.

### LIFE GROUP APPLICATION

In this section, you'll find ways to apply the value of truth as you practice worship, community, and mission as a Life Group. These ideas aren't meant for today's meeting, but can be used in your Life Group over time.

After you complete this section, go back as a group and star your favorite ideas. Then pick a date to do them! We encourage you to choose an example that will stretch your group as you grow in greater understanding of God's truth. Some of these can be implemented seamlessly into your Life Group's regular meeting rhythms, but some may be better organized as events outside of the normal rhythms.



## WORSHIP

*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.*

— *John 4:23*

True worship is inseparable from the truth of God. Receiving God's truth will lead us to love Him more and proclaim that in our worship.

## LOVING TRUTH IN WORSHIP

Experiencing truth in worship means that, out of our love for truth, we prioritize God's Word during our time as a group.

How can your Life Group experience truth in worship?  
Discuss the given options and write in an idea of your own:

- 1 Listen to (or sing) worship songs that directly quote Scripture. Consider reaching out to the worship director at your campus for suggestions.
- 2 Read God's Word out loud together. Take a moment of silence to reflect and abide in the truth that you read.

3 Your Group's Idea:

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**PROCLAIMING  
TRUTH IN  
WORSHIP**

Expressing truth in worship means to proclaim truth to one another and back to God.

What does this look like in your group? Discuss the options below, then write in an idea of your own:

- 1 Confess difficulties and sin to God and each other by being honest about what you struggle with.
- 2 Pray God's Word together. You can start with a Psalm and make the author's words your own.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:

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**COMMUNITY**

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

— Ephesians 4:15-16

When truth is the foundation of our community, we can grow to better reflect the image of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).



## LOVING TRUTH IN COMMUNITY

Experiencing truth in community looks like helping each other love truth while allowing it to do a transforming work in your lives.

What does it look like to experience God's truth in community?  
Discuss the options below, then write in an idea of your own:

- 1 Point each other to God's Word before giving personal advice.
- 2 Establish accountability with each other to live according to God's Word.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:  

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## PROCLAIMING TRUTH IN COMMUNITY

Truth will become a marker of your community when you regularly proclaim it to one another.

What does it look like for truth to be a marker of your community?  
Discuss the options below, then write in an idea of your own:

- 1 Make a habit of texting Scripture to each other.
- 2 Practice being open and honest about your thoughts and feelings. If you've been wronged by or disagree with someone in your group, go to them directly regarding the offense. Do so with grace and compassion, working towards restoration and avoiding bitterness.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:  

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## MISSION

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation."*

— Mark 16:15

We're called to share the truth of the Gospel with all creation.  
We're more effective when we do it together!

## LOVING TRUTH ON MISSION

Experiencing truth on mission means to love God's truth in a way that both prepares and compels us to share the Gospel.

What does it look like to experience God's truth on mission?  
Discuss the options below, then write in an idea of your own:

1

Memorize Scripture so that you can share it with others.

2

Ask God to reveal the people with whom He'd like you to share truth.

3

Your Group's Idea:

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## PROCLAIMING TRUTH IN OUR MISSION

Truth is evident in our mission when we proclaim it with our words and actions.

What does it look like for truth to be evident in our mission?  
Discuss the options below, then write in an idea of your own:

1

Practice living transparently with your Life Group. Don't hide the messy parts of life, but be truthful with your real struggles. Being real makes you approachable and opens doors for the Gospel to be shared.

2

Practice sharing your story with the Gospel in mind. How has God's transformative work impacted your life?

Your Group's Idea:

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## **VALUING TRUTH**

**We value truth because it's...**

**A reflection of God**

**The source of our salvation (Jesus Himself)!**

God's truth has the power to transform our lives and make us more like Jesus. Valuing truth means we love and proclaim it. It also means we allow it to inform our daily lives: how we think, speak, act, worship, live in community, and live on mission to the world around us.

## **Let's Pray**

**Heavenly Father, thank you for Your Word. Thank you that we can know about You because of the Bible and know You personally because of Your Son. Help us to be a people that loves the truth. Allow it to transform our lives. May we meditate on it, hide it in our hearts, and obey it with our lives. Help us to be a people that proclaims the truth. Help us to be honest with one another, speak Scripture to each other, and share the Gospel with the world around us. May our lives give You glory! Amen.**

Value Two

# GOODNESS:

We receive and  
respond to the  
goodness of God.

When you hear the word **goodness**, what's  
the first thing that comes to mind?

## WHAT IS GOODNESS?

That which displays the character of God.

## WHERE IS GOODNESS FOUND?

Goodness and redemption belong to God.

*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear Him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers Him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.*

— Psalm 34:8-10 & 19-22

## Discuss

**How have you tasted and seen God's goodness in your life? With your Life Group, share one good thing you have received from God.**

Psalm 34:10 says, "...those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." If we're honest with ourselves, sometimes it's hard to believe this. Think of a situation that is causing you anxiety because you don't see much good in it.

Psalm 73 is a great example of someone struggling to believe God is good in the middle of difficult circumstances. In verses 1-15, the psalmist lists the injustices he has experienced. But then his focus changes mid-Psalm.

**WE RECEIVE**  
**GOD'S**  
**GOODNESS**

Read Psalm 73:16-17. Where did the psalmist go to receive perspective on his circumstances?

Even though his circumstances didn't seem to change, worshiping God led the psalmist to remember God's character and presence. The psalmist's definition of goodness changed by the end of the Psalm: *"But for me it is good to be near God"* (v. 28).

God is near to us because Jesus made the way to Him through our redemption. God has been good to us in so many ways, but redemption (Psalm 34:22) is the ultimate good we experience from God's hand.

The goodness of God is demonstrated through His character, which means we can receive His goodness when we focus on His character. Here are just a few examples from Scripture:

**Kindness:** God's kindness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4)

**Mercy:** God's mercy and love brings us salvation in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6)

**Compassion:** God is near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18)

**Faithfulness:** God remains faithful, even when we are faithless (2 Timothy 2:13)

**Love:** God's love holds us through life's trials (Romans 8:38-39)

Can you think of and share other aspects of God's character that we receive as goodness?



**WE**  
**RESPOND**  
**TO GOD'S**  
**GOODNESS**

Receiving God's goodness moves our hearts to respond to God.  
Psalm 63 shows us just some of the ways we might respond:

**Seek Him and thirst for Him (v. 1)**

**Praise Him (v. 3)**

**Find our satisfaction in Him (v. 5)**

**Sing for joy (v. 7)**

**Cling to Him (v.8)**

Receiving God's goodness also changes the way we respond to others. When we express goodness in our relationships, Scripture teaches that we are simply reflecting the goodness of God that we have received.

**Look up each passage and fill in the blanks:**

*Galatians 5:22 - We can demonstrate goodness because this is a fruit of the \_\_\_\_\_ in us.*

*Luke 7:47 - When we know how much we have been forgiven, we can \_\_\_\_\_ .*

*2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 - When God comforts us, we can \_\_\_\_\_ .*

*1 John 4:11-12 - Because God loves us, we can \_\_\_\_\_ .*

*1 Timothy 6:17-18 - God provides us material things to enjoy, so we can be \_\_\_\_\_ .*

In what ways have you seen your actions and attitudes toward others become more like God's good character as the Holy Spirit has transformed your heart?

Let's explore how receiving and responding to God's goodness helps us express our identity toward God through worship, toward the Church through community, and toward the world through mission.

### LIFE GROUP APPLICATION

This section demonstrates how your Life Group can apply the value of goodness through worship, community, and mission. These ideas aren't meant for today's meeting, but can be used in your Life Group over time.

After you complete this section, go back as a group and star your favorite ideas. Then pick a date to do them! We encourage you to choose an example that will stretch your group as you grow in greater understanding of God's goodness. Some of these can be implemented seamlessly into your Life Group's regular meeting rhythms, but some may be better organized as events outside of the normal rhythms.

### WORSHIP

*We give thanks to You, O God; we give thanks, for Your name is near. We recount Your wondrous deeds.*

— Psalm 75:1

Entering God's presence in worship can change our perspective of suffering and injustice as we reflect on our redemption and remember God's goodness with thanksgiving.

**RECEIVING  
GOD'S  
GOODNESS  
IN WORSHIP**

Experiencing God's goodness in worship means that we focus on God's character and nearness.

How can your Life Group experience God's goodness in worship? Discuss the examples below, then write in one idea of your own:

1

Select a Psalm that highlights specific attributes of God, like Psalm 145. Read it aloud, pausing after each character trait is mentioned to meditate on your experience of that attribute in your life.

2

Read the following verse aloud several times, quieting your hearts and receiving the rest found in God's presence and nearness:

*Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. — Matthew 11:28*

3

Your Group's Idea:

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**RESPONDING  
TO GOD'S  
GOODNESS IN  
WORSHIP**

Expressing goodness in worship involves declaring God's character aloud to one another, then back to God in praise.

How can your Life Group respond to God's goodness in worship? Discuss the examples below, then write in one idea of your own:

1 As a group, commit to looking and praying for opportunities to show God's kindness to someone this week. It could be a stranger, neighbor, or friend. Buy coffee for the person behind you at Starbucks, mow your neighbor's lawn, or bring a meal to a sick friend.

2 Engage in a time of prayer focused on thanksgiving. Use the popcorn prayer method—anyone can pray at any time, popping in with short sentences that thank God for something. Challenge yourselves to do this for a longer period of time. Then, every time you do it, think of more to thank God for.

3 Your Group's Idea:

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## COMMUNITY

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

— John 13:34-35

Relationships within our community help us experience and demonstrate God's good gifts in a unique way.



## RECEIVING GOODNESS IN COMMUNITY

Experiencing God's goodness in community means helping each other see how God's character is the origin of His good gifts. This especially applies to the love and fellowship we feel when we're together.

What does it look like to experience God's goodness in community? Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

- 1 In your conversations, practice connecting good news and celebrations to the character trait of God that made them possible. For example, you might say, "I'm really grateful for this answer to prayer. God is so powerful."
- 2 Jesus wasn't afraid to express His needs (John 4:7; Matthew 26:38). Have each group member share one personal need. It might be a need for physical help, spiritual guidance, emotional support, prayer, etc. As a group, make a plan to provide for those needs in the next week. Each person should practice receiving help and goodness from one another with humility and without guilt.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:

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## RESPONDING TO GOODNESS IN COMMUNITY

Goodness becomes a trait of our community when we treat each other with the goodness we've received from God.

What could it look like for goodness to be a marker of our community? Discuss the options on the next page, then write in one idea of your own.

1 Take the time to encourage and comfort each other during your group discussions, even when that means setting aside discussion questions for a while.

2 What would it look like to extend the generosity of God to someone in your group? Generosity can apply to money, but also to time and talents. Find a way to give generously to a group member this week.

3 Your Group's Idea:

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## MISSION

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

— *Ephesians 2:10*

The good works we do in the world are the overflow of what Jesus has done in our hearts through our redemption. Now we just need to walk in the reality of our new identity!

## RECEIVING GOODNESS ON MISSION

Experiencing goodness on mission means listening with our hearts to hear God's call to the good work He's doing in the world. Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

1 Identify places in your neighborhood/community where God may already be working. This can apply to anything that exists to support the good of the community! Make a list of the goodness that exists.

2 Spend time in prayer as a group and ask God to show you the path toward the good works He's already prepared for you to do. Expect Him to reveal at least one next step!

3 Your Group's Idea:

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**RESPONDING**  
**TO GOODNESS**  
**IN MISSION**

Goodness is evident in our mission when people who don't know Jesus experience a taste of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What does it look like for goodness to be evident in our mission? Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

Host a Life Group garage sale and donate the proceeds toward a ministry or non-profit that's meeting the needs of your community. Invite neighbors to join you!

Invite your neighbors to complete a grounds cleanup at your local school or park. Afterwards, celebrate with a meal! You can connect with your city to identify specific needs.

Your Group's Idea:

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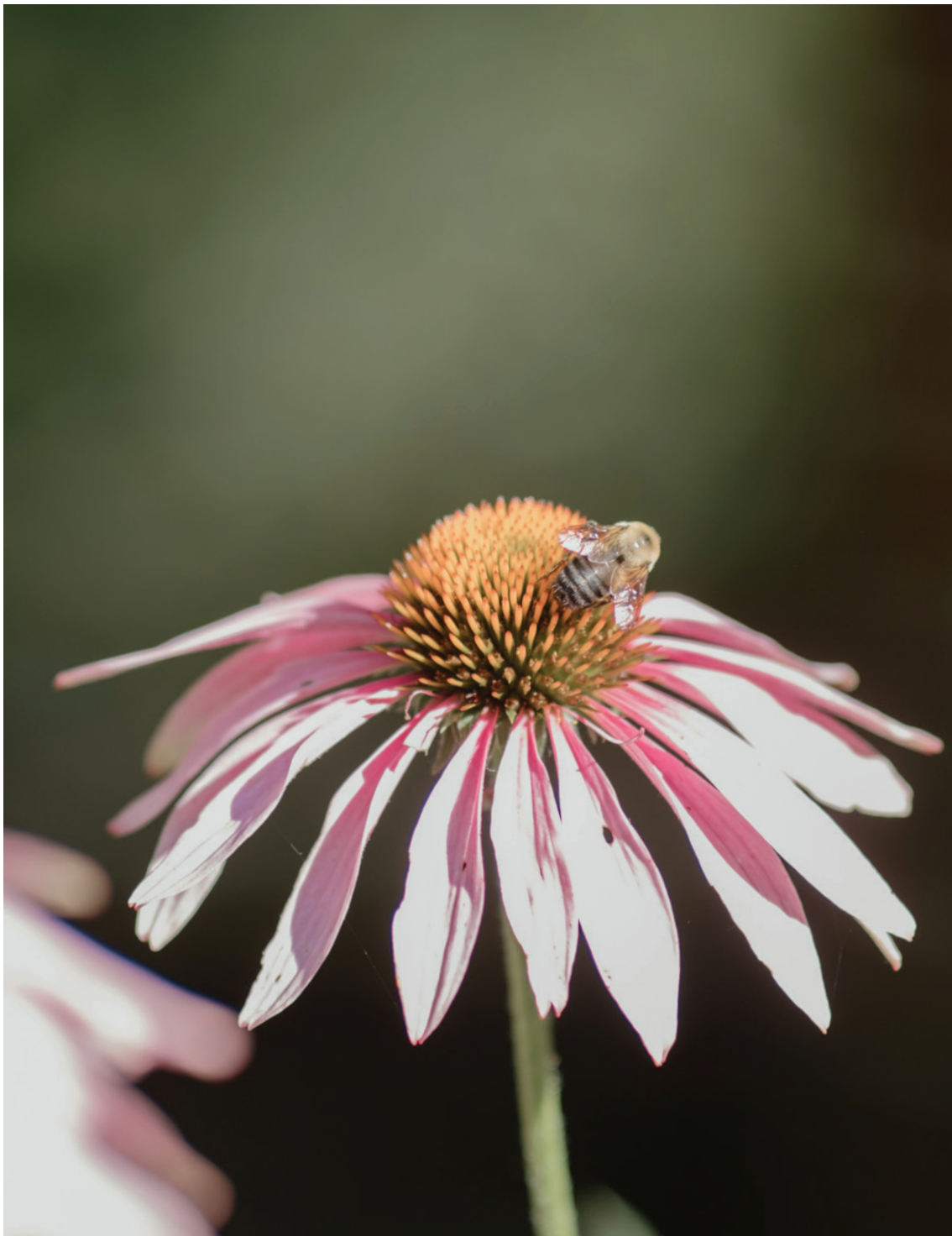
## VALUING GOODNESS

**GOODNESS =  
That which demonstrates the character of God.**

We value goodness because it allows us to understand the character of God and demonstrate the nature of his Kingdom to the world. Even when circumstances aren't good, we can trust that we'll still receive goodness from the hand of a good God.

## Let's Pray

**Father in Heaven, You are good! Even when situations in our lives aren't good, we thank You that your character doesn't change. Thank you for allowing us to receive Your goodness and respond in praise—especially when we take the time to worship You in every circumstance. As a Life Group, help us receive Your goodness through our care for one another. May our love for each other overflow from our experience of the love Jesus demonstrates to us. Finally, Holy Spirit, help us to respond when You lead us into the good works You have prepared for us. We pray that the world will see who You are and be invited into the goodness of Your Kingdom. Amen.**



Value Three

# BEAUTY:

We enjoy and  
create as a  
reflection of  
God's beauty.

When you hear the word **beauty**, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

WHAT IS  
BEAUTY?

That which reflects the glory of God.

WHERE IS  
BEAUTY  
FOUND?

Beauty and eternity belong to God.

*What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. **He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.** I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.*

*I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before Him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away.*

— Ecclesiastes 3:9-15

## **VALUING BEAUTY**

The Trinitarian God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is beauty, and beauty belongs to God. All that He is, does, and creates is beautiful. Reflect on this truth as you read the following passage:

*Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth!*

— Psalm 96:6-9

**What are some of the most beautiful things you have ever seen?**

It's important to remember that the beauty of God is far deeper than art and aesthetics. Consider these synonyms and think about how beauty already plays a role in your faith. Then write in another synonym.

Awe, order, rest, creativity, creation, vision, wholeness, glory, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Next, read each passage and describe what's beautiful in it:**

**Genesis 1:1-5**

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**James 3:16-18**

**Philippians 2:5-8**

**Psalm 4:6-8**

The beauty of God is far reaching and can be found in every one of His attributes and works.



We are made in the image of a beautiful and beauty-creating God (Genesis 1:26-27). This identity as image bearers is our foundation for enjoying and creating as reflections of God's beauty. Being creators and admirers of beauty aren't things we do—it's who we are.

**WE ENJOY**  
**GOD'S**  
**BEAUTY**

We recognize that everything created reflects the mind and heart of God. Therefore, all creation is worth appreciating and enjoying.

So often, we think of grandiose levels of beauty and miss out on the beauty right in front of us. You don't have to travel to the Seven Wonders of the World to enjoy beauty. You can enjoy beauty even in everyday life.

List three simple, beautiful things you enjoy that point you to God:

1

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2

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3

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**And why are you anxious about clothing?  
Consider the lilies of the field, how they  
grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I  
tell you, even Solomon in all his glory  
was not arrayed like one of these.**

**- Matthew 6:28-29**



## WE CREATE AS A REFLECTION OF GOD'S BEAUTY

When we create, we are reflecting the creative nature of God.

Any time we bring order to chaos, we're creating beauty. Consider gardening, writing poetry, creating spreadsheets, painting, coaching, and parenting. There are so many ways we can create beauty, all of which can be acts of worship to God when we do them for His glory and to reflect His character.

List three ways you create and reflect beauty in your world:

1

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2

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3

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also that everyone  
should eat and  
drink and take  
pleasure in all his  
toil—this is God's  
gift to man.

— Ecclesiastes 3:13

Beauty already exists in your Life Group. Let's further explore how enjoying and reflecting God's beauty helps us express our identity toward God through worship, toward the Church through community and toward the world through mission:

### LIFE GROUP APPLICATION

In this section, you'll find several ways to apply the value of beauty as you practice worship, community, and mission as a group. These ideas aren't meant for today's meeting, but can be used in your Life Group over time.

After you complete this section, go back as a group and star your favorite ideas. Then pick a date to do them! We encourage you to choose an example that will stretch your group as you grow in greater understanding of God's beauty. Some of these can be implemented seamlessly into your Life Group's regular meeting rhythms, but some may be better organized as events outside of the normal rhythms.

### WORSHIP

*"How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God."*

— Psalm 84:1-2

Beauty is not our primary goal. It's not to be worshiped, but instead leads us to worship God.

### ENJOYING BEAUTY IN WORSHIP

Experiencing beauty in worship means that, out of our enjoyment of God and the beauty He creates, we worship Him.

How can your Life Group experience the beauty of God in worship? Discuss the options on the next page, then write in one idea of your own.

1 Root your worship in the character of God. Spend time reflecting on how holy and wonderful He is. That's beautiful news to us!

2 At each of your meetings, assign different Life Group members dates to bring and facilitate different forms of beauty in worship. This could be through a song, a poem, photos, etc. Spend time in awe of our awesome and powerful God.

3 Your Group's Idea:

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### CREATING BEAUTY IN WORSHIP

Expressing beauty in worship means reflecting the beauty of God back to Him. This isn't limited to just musical worship, but can be expressed through anything we create to glorify God.

What does it look like for beauty to be expressed in worship? Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

1 Incorporate singing into your time as a group. If you don't have musicians, YouTube is a wonderful resource! Ask the worship director at your campus for song ideas.

2 Choose a Psalm to read and reflect on throughout the week. Create a poem, prayer, or another form of expression that reflects the beauty of God.

3 Your Group's Idea:

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## COMMUNITY

*But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

— 1 John 1:7

Creating a culture and community that reflects the truth of God is beautiful and glorious.

## ENJOYING BEAUTY IN COMMUNITY

Experiencing beauty as a community means finding time to enjoy God's beauty together. This can be accomplished during normal Life Group rhythms and by living life together.

How can your Life Group experience the beauty of God in community? Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

- 1 Visit a beautiful garden, such as the Cranbrook Gardens or Belle Isle Conservatory. Don't stop at acknowledging the beauty of the creation—let it remind you of the beauty of the Creator.
- 2 Sign up for the Ford Rouge Factory Tour and discuss how the automotive assembly process brings order to chaos and reflects the beauty of God.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:

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## CREATING BEAUTY IN COMMUNITY

Beauty becomes a marker of our community when we regularly create beautiful things together. This could mean creating something new or bringing order where there is chaos.

What could it look like for beauty to be a marker of your Life Group? Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

- 1 Help an expecting parent or foster family prepare their home for their next stage of life.
- 2 Organize a potluck meal that showcases everyone's best dishes.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:

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## MISSION

*How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

— Romans 10:14-15

The Kingdom of God is a place of beauty and order. When we bring beauty where it didn't previously exist, we are engaging in God's mission. While the Gospel is the most beautiful truth, the ways that we share the Gospel can also show beauty.

## **ENJOYING BEAUTY ON MISSION**

Experiencing beauty on mission means enjoying God's beauty in a way that both prepares and compels us to share the Gospel.

What does it look like to experience God's beauty on mission? Discuss the options below, then write in one idea of your own:

- 1 Reflect on the beauty of God as you engage with other beautiful projects and things. Don't keep these to yourselves—share them!
- 2 Pick a night to experience beauty within the cultures around your city.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:

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## **CREATING BEAUTY ON MISSION**

Beauty is evident in our mission when we create things that reflect God's glory. This is an invitational experience. How can you create a community that others are attracted to and want to be included in?

What does it look like for beauty to be evident in our mission?

- 1 Plan a neighborhood cleanup or another beautification project. Make the neighborhood a more beautiful, inviting place, where people can come together and appreciate beauty.
- 2 Pick an upcoming holiday and throw a party to celebrate God's work. Invite neighbors and friends to experience God's beauty through a party that acknowledges His creation.
- 3 Your Group's Idea:

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## VALUING BEAUTY

### **BEAUTY =**

**That which reflects the glory of God.**

We value beauty because beauty is a reflection of God! God's beauty is evident throughout creation, even in the mundane. Valuing beauty means that we enjoy the beauty of God and create as a reflection of His beauty.

## **Let's Pray**

**Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we recognize that You are beauty. Help us enjoy and worship You for all Your beautiful attributes. Draw the hearts of all creation to worship You. Let Your creativity be seen by all. Let Your creation be an instrument that demonstrates how great You are. Help us to recognize that we are Your image bearers, created to rest, create order, and bring the beauty of Your Kingdom to this earth. Broaden our understanding of beauty and create a beautiful, invitational community among us. Amen.**





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