



Fight Club | Shawn Johnson | 5.6.18

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

If you could change places with anyone in the world, who would it be and why?

SHARE

Welcome to our teaching series, Just Getting Started.

On the cross Jesus boldly proclaimed, "It is finished." As followers of Jesus, the work of the cross is complete, our sins forgiven and we have become new creations. As a result of the perfect work of Jesus, now we can boldly believe what the apostle Paul says when he writes, "the old is gone, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The work on the cross is finished but God is just getting started with us.

Hebrews 10:14 tells us, "For by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

Even though we have been made perfect, day by day the gospel continues to make us more holy. God is working in and through us, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Theologically this is called progressive sanctification, where we are becoming more like Jesus throughout our

lives as disciples of Christ. So, don't be discouraged with the ups and downs of life--God is not giving up on us. He is a faithful Father who promises that He will finish what He has started (Philippians 1:6).

God develops our faith, purifies our motives and shapes our gifts for His glory. He is just getting started with that anger issue, addiction problem, impatience, envy, pride, or lust. You can name a struggle but God has given you a different name...son and daughter. The story is far from over and God desires more than anything for you to experience freedom in the finished work of the cross. He is just getting started.

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power." 1 Corinthians 4:20

Read Acts 2:42-47

This is a beautiful snapshot of the church in its earliest form.

Reread the passage as a group. As you do, make a list of as many attributes of the early church as you can. What words would you use to describe this first church?

There is a lot we can learn from this passage. It is essential to study it as we try to figure out how to be the church in 2018. One of the recurring themes is community. These early followers of Jesus were together all the time (v. 44). They prayed together (v. 42), ate together (v. 46), and took care of anyone in need (v. 45). The first church knew that God was just getting started, and in order to continue the movement, they needed to do it together.

The disciples learned this from Jesus. For the past three years, Jesus and the disciples went everywhere together. He brought them with him as he healed the sick, cared for the oppressed, and proclaimed the good news of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23). He invited them into his life. Not because he needed their help, but because the plan from the beginning has always been for God's children to carry out His work on this earth together.

When we meet together, we are participating in a tradition that is thousands of years old. It is essential that we continue to make it a priority in our lives.

Throughout your journey, what has community meant to you?

Why do you think God created us to go through life together in community?

GROW

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Shawn mentioned his message that Jesus visited the world but he did life with the disciples. Who you do life with is vital to the health, direction, and joy of your journey. It's why God said it is not good for man to be alone. It's why Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, shared that two are better than one. This is certain: you cannot do life on your own and you were never meant to.

Matthew Henry shares this commentary on the verse,

“Hence Solomon infers the mischief of solitude: Woe to him that is alone. He lies exposed to many temptations which good company and friendship would prevent and help him to guard against; he wants that advantage which a man has by the countenance of his friend, as iron has of being sharpened by iron.”

When you do life with people who are also pursuing Christ, iron is sharpening iron. There is strength in knowing someone has your back. There is power in the prayers others will pray on your behalf. There is encouragement when someone believes in your dreams and celebrates your successes with you. Life is just better when you have these people beside you!

How can this group do life together more often? If you already have great connections, go around and share some of your favorite memories or activities as a group. If you haven't been together long enough to step into real, meaningful relationship, what are some things you can do as a group to bond together?

Maybe you have great community and could bring someone into the fold to strengthen. Is there someone on the outskirts God is impressing on your heart to reach out to?

MOVE

Read James 5:16

There's more to community and relationship than occasional outings or weekly meetings. Doing life with someone can be a battle at times--fighting for each other and standing in the gap when things don't look so well.

What does it mean to stand in the gap for another; to intercede on their behalf? One Bible scholar defined standing in the gap as the call "*to expose oneself for the protection of something.*" How are you at exposing yourself for the protection of another?

In Ezekiel 22, Israel was in a bad place. Murder, idolatry, mistreatment of others, and adultery are just a few of the sins listed in the chapter. It was here that God's anger began to burn against the sins of the people and he looked for one righteous man to plead the cause of the wayward nation. But he found none. Therefore, the wrath of God was poured out upon the nation. It was destroyed, along with the temple, and the people went into captivity.

What if there had been just one person who would have stood in the gap between God and Israel? It had happened before. Psalm 106:23 illustrates that moment, "*So he declared he would destroy them. But Moses, his chosen one, stepped between the Lord and the people. He begged him to turn from his anger and not destroy them.*"

Moses was one man who stood in the gap between God and others, and a nation was spared judgment. Just think of what could happen if one person stood in the gap for another. If YOU stood in the gap for another. Imagine what would happen if you became an advocate for the people in your life.

Are you in need for someone to fight on your behalf in a situation. Share with the group what you are going through and how they can stand in the gap on your behalf this week.

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. Ask God to bring this real, authentic, iron sharpens iron, relationship within your group. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

TO GO

“The church is where the poor have their needs met by the rich, and the rich discover that they need the poor. Where the heavily burdened find willing backs to share the load. Where the restorers speak louder than the destroyers. Where an orphan discovers family, and a wanderer finds a home. Where all are welcome, the seekers and explorers right alongside the finders and the guiders. “

Margaret Feinberg

