

Weekly Study

Building the Church | Doug Wekenman, Ryan Wekenman, Ethan Matott | July 31, 2022

**A note to leaders: there have been two additional questions added to the “grow” and “move” portions of the Weekly entitled ‘Dive Deeper’. This is designed for you to help guide your group into deeper relationship with Jesus and each other, and take an additional step for owning their relationship with Jesus throughout their week.*

S T A R T

Go around and check in with your group with the following questions:

- What
- What is the most impactful or challenging thing you learned during Sunday’s sermon?
- What did that thing teach you about God? About yourself?

S H A R E

On Sunday Doug, Ryan and Ethan completed our “Where’s Jesus?” series by discussing where Jesus is after Luke 24 — our theme verse — giving us some application steps to most effectively find Jesus in our lives and ultimately partner with him to build His Church. Jesus opened up the minds of his disciples to understand that the Bible is one unified story, with everything in the scriptures leading to Him. They reminded us that if we major on the principles instead of the person of Jesus, we will end up exhausted — but because of Jesus, he has created room for imperfect people to continue pursuing Him and growing together. Jesus is busy building His church, and as Red Rocks Austin we will rise to the challenge to get out of the grandstands of critique and fight to show the world a picture of how beautiful Jesus and his church is.

G R O W

Read Luke 15:21-24.

The gospel proclaims that God loved the entire world so much that he sent his son to die for our sins — so that *none* would perish, but all would be able to inherit eternal life. Throughout the new testament we see stories of how followers of Jesus got busy taking the gospel to the ends of the earth and how they were met with resistance along the way (ex: Acts 15). It’s easy to begin to make mental notes of who we believe is worthy and unworthy of the gospel message, and this is brought to light in the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15.

If you read the entire parable of the prodigal son, you will find that the older brother gets upset with both his brother and father when the younger one returns — he had done everything right,

and the one who had squandered everything was the one receiving a party in his honor? It's here that we find two important lessons buried in this passage: conflict is an opportunity to be further refined and made like Jesus, and we always start with identity when a lost brother or sister arrives in your community. We learn to pray as David did: "search me God, and know my heart..." (Psalm 139). David didn't pray for God to search the heart of the person who was in the wrong; He took ownership of his emotions and assumed a posture of humility in allowing God to reveal the things that were keeping him from being more like Christ and ultimately being freed up to pursue the purposes and plans of God in and through his life.

- When you hear about church scandals, bad news, etc., what is your normal gut reaction?
- How difficult or easy would it be for you to pray what David prayed the next time you hear the next piece of bad news or hear of someone receiving favor/grace from God that you don't believe they deserve? Explain.
- *Dive Deeper:* Take time this week to reflect on "bad news" or a church scandal where you jumped to a place of judgment. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God has to say about the situation and what He wants to show you about how you can become more like Jesus by reframing your perspective.

M O V E

Read Acts 15:19.

In Acts 15 there is a cultural debate taking place: the church has been expanding and disciples of Jesus are bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. In our words, more imperfect people are finding space to experience God for who He really is. The warning to the Jews in this passage is to not make turning to God difficult for the Gentiles by making secondary issues, primary ones. They're being asked to stop pointing at the minors as though they were majors and critiquing people for things that didn't matter in light of eternity.

What's the application for us as believers? After we do the hard heart work of asking the Holy Spirit to search us, know us and find any offensive way in us (Psalm 139), we are better positioned in humility to remove the barriers that are keeping people from experiencing God. Humans don't usually allow themselves to be searched! However, when we do allow it, we will find that we will be able to move from critiquing everything to surveying our 'house'. Once we have done these things, we'll be equipped to step into building His church together.

- What is one thing you can do this week to move from a place of critique to a place of surveying?

- Have you ever experienced resistance or pushback as you began to try and be a solution to the problems you see? How did you respond? And if you haven't yet started to respond to the problems around you, does the idea of pushback make you hesitant? Ask God to give you boldness and encouragement as you take a step of obedience this week.
- *Dive Deeper:* Jump down to the "pray" section and split up into groups of no more than three to pray together.

P R A Y

Spend some time sharing prayer requests. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into separate groups to share more freely.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to stir a desire to not forget your first love, Jesus, this week.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal places in your heart that you are trying to follow principles rather than follow Jesus. Meet with your group leader or a friend and dig out scriptural truth to help you replace any false beliefs you may be holding on to.