

When we're children, it sometimes seems like every adult asks the same question: What do you want to be when you grow up? It can be a fun question to think about and children are refreshingly candid and optimistic when it comes to their plans for their future. Somewhere along the line, however, we tend to get a bit cynical and jaded with age. Some of us stop dreaming all together. What would happen if we tried thinking like children again? What if you saw your future with that same joyful confidence? In week four of NEXT, we want to ask ourselves, "Where are we going?" We have spent the first three weeks of this study taking about "here" and now we want to begin to dream about "there." There is no cynicism allowed this week because we believe as long as you are alive, God has a "next" for you. We may not grow up to be an astronaut or a rock star but we have plenty of time to grow into the people God created us to be. Let's spend some time dreaming this week and ask God: "Where are we going?"

SESSION 4: **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

SMALL TALK

During each session, we will begin with a question or brief activity designed to get everyone on the same page for the session.

1 Have some fun discussing in your group: what did each of you want to be when you grew up?

2 What has God been teaching your group so far during this study? What is each of you learning?

TEACHING

During each session in **NEXT**, we will be watching a teaching from Pastor Greg Surratt as he walks us through Luke 5:1-11. When Peter decided to follow Jesus, he must have asked himself, "Where am I going?" Following Jesus is an adventure. It can be uncertain and difficult but as long as we stay close to our Guide, we can have confidence that he is leading us to where we need to be. Let's begin our teaching from Greg now:

SHOW DVD SESSION 4

REFLECT

In the questions that follow, your group will spend some time reflecting on the teaching you just experienced.

1 The first place that we are called to go is to the church. How can you serve God in the church? If you are not involved already, what is standing in your way?

2 Second, we are all called to our communities. If you were to move to a new town tomorrow, would your neighbors know you were gone? What impact are you making on the people around you? What could our potential impact be if we practiced radical generosity?

3 Finally, we are all called to the world. Do you believe that your efforts can help change the world? Spend some time reflecting: How might God want to use you to change the lives of others?

4 This study is almost complete. Spend some time as a group discussing the future: Where are you going as a group? Is there interest in remaining together for another study?

RESPOND

Now that we have spent some time reflecting on what God is saying to us, we want to consider some possible next steps.

1 Have you stopped dreaming about how God wants to use you? Set some time aside this week, ask God to fire your imagination, and dream. Consider sharing the results of this with the group next week.

2 Has your group ever served the community together? Brainstorm some ideas for how your group can serve together in the near future. How can you demonstrate the limitless generosity of God to the people around you?

3 At the end of his time on earth, Jesus gave his disciples a job to do. In Matthew 28:18-20, he told them to go and make disciples. Making disciples is the primary way that our faith is passed from one person to the next. No matter where we are going, making disciples must be part of that journey. Are you actively engaged in discipling or being disciplined? If not, ask God this week two questions: Who can I learn from? Who can I teach?

4 Allow everyone to answer this question: "How can we pray for you this week?" Be sure to write prayer requests on your Prayer and Praise Report on page ???.

Close the session in prayer.

GOING DEEPER

You can explore the following Bible passage as a group (if there is time) or on your own between sessions.

Read Leviticus 19:9-18. Leviticus is all about learning to live together. God wanted the Israelites to know his expectations for worshipping him and living with one another. This week's Going Deeper passage contains some of the most important of these rules, including one that Jesus would call the most important commandment of all.

1 What stands out to you in this passage? Where is God drawing your attention?

2 This passage is full of rules – like do not steal, do not lie, do not oppress your neighbor, etc. – that most people today would agree are good and important. Why do you think rules like these have stood the test of time?

3 Does reading this passage call attention to anything in your life that needs to change? Perhaps an attitude or relationship that needs to be repaired? What do you think God is asking you to do in response to this?

DAILY REFLECTIONS

These are daily reviews of some key Bible verses that will help you think about and apply the insights from this session. The questions are meant to help you reflect on truths related to each week's topic.

Day 1 – John 13:34

A New Commandment

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. (NLT)

God has commanded us to love one another. Who is God asking you to love today?

Day 2 – 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

The Body

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. (NLT)

We are all part of one body – we share it with all Christians everywhere. Does this sense of unity characterize your relationships with other believers?

Day 3 – John 14:5

The Way

"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (NLT)

Sometimes God is silent when we ask him where we are going. Are you willing to follow him despite uncertainty?

Day 4 – Luke 9:1-2

Sent

One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases. Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. (NLT)

God does not just draw us to himself. He always sends his followers out into the world to serve and love it.

Day 5 – John 17:18

Into the World

Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. (NLT)

We have been sent into the world. Are you willing to go where God calls?

MEMORY VERSE

When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me—I’m too much of a sinner to be around you.” For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!”

—Luke 5:8-10 [NLT]