



## COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

### “Living Intentionally: Exploring Your Place in God’s Calling” Appendix of Activities and Illustrations

#### **Activity #1 - Icebreaker – Penny Dates**

Depending on the size of your Leaders Council, you can complete this as one group or divide your leaders into multiple groups of a size that will allow completion of the icebreaker in the time you have allotted.

Give each participant a penny. Select pennies with dates that go back 5, 10, 20 years as appropriate for the age of your leaders. Then ask each to look at the date on the penny and share something memorable or significant that happened to them during that year. This is a great way for leaders to learn things about each other that might not otherwise be shared.

#### **Activity #2 - Who Do You Think You Are?**

Create a handout with three columns numbered one through three. At the top of column one put the heading “Who Are You?” At the top of column two put the heading “If you were in a job interview and asked to describe yourself, what would you say?” At the top of column three put the heading “What other things might be important for someone to know about you?”

Instruct participants to answer the questions in order. Allow 5 – 8 minutes for them to complete it. This can be merely a reflective activity for them, or you could use responses from a few volunteers to start off Session #2 introduction.

## **Illustration #1**

Bob Weber, Past President of Kiwanis International, tells a story of a time he was speaking in a small town and spending the night at the home of a farmer on the outskirts of town. As the two men sat relaxing on the porch, the paper boy came by with the evening paper. He noted a sign the farmer had in front of the house that read, "Puppies for sale". The boy got off of his bicycle to ask the farmer, "how much for the puppies?"

As the farmer replied, "\$25.00", the boy's face dropped as he asked, "well, can I see them anyway?" The farmer whistled and around the corner of the porch the mother dog bounded with four puppies following, wagging their tails and yipping. Moment later a fifth puppy came around the house dragging one hind leg. "What the matter with that one?" the boy inquired. The farmer explained that the pup had been to the vet and had no hip joint, that he would never be completely right.

The boy dropped his bike, reached into his collection bad, pulling out 50 cents. "Please mister, I want to buy that pup. I'll pay you 50 cents every week until I get to \$25.00."

"Son, you don't understand. That pup is going to be a cripple forever. Why in the world would you want such a useless pup as that?"

The boy paused, reached down, pulled up his pant leg revealing an iron brace and leather knee-strap around a poor twisted leg. "Mister, that pup is going to need someone who understands him to help him in life."

The boy's response was an act of grace, came from the heart, out of love. God's love for us is similar but on the grandest of scales.

### **Illustration #2 – The Grace Awakening by Chuck Swindoll**

“Imagine a typical scene several years later. The dinner bell rings through the king’s palace, and David comes to the head of the table and sits down. In a few moments Amnon – clear, crafty Amnon – sits to the left of David. Love and gracious Tamar, a charming and beautiful young woman, arrives and sits beside Amnon. And then across the way, Solomon walks slowly from his study – precocious, brilliant, preoccupied Solomon. The heir apparent slowly sits down. And then Absalom – handsome, winsome Absalom with beautiful flowing hair, black as a raven, down to his shoulders – sits down. That particular evening Joab, the courageous warrior and David’s commander of the troops, has been invited to dinner. Muscular, bronzed Joab is seated near the king. Afterward, they wait. They hear the shuffling of feet, the clump, clump, clump of the crutches as Mephibosheth rather awkwardly finds his place at the table and slips into his seat ... and the tablecloth covers his feet. I ask you: Did Mephibosheth understand grace?”

### **Illustration #3 – The “Yes Face”**

During his days as president, Thomas Jefferson and a group of companions were traveling across the country on horseback. They came to a river which had left its banks because of a recent downpour. The swollen river had washed the bridge away. Each rider was forced to ford the river on horseback, fighting for his life against the rapid currents. The very real possibility of death threatened each rider, which caused a traveler who was not part of their group to step aside and watch. After several had plunged in and made it to the other side, the stranger asked President Jefferson if he would ferry him across the river. The president agreed without hesitation. The man climbed on, and shortly thereafter the two of them made it to the other side.

As the stranger slid off the back of the saddle onto dry ground, one in the group asked him, “Tell me, why did you select the president to ask this favor of?” The man was shocked, admitting he had no idea it was the president who had helped him.

“All I know,” he said, “Is that on some of your faces was written the answer ‘No’, and on some of them was the answer ‘Yes’. His was a ‘Yes’ face.”

#### **Illustration #4 – Family Members**

Most of us come from imperfect families, with difficult family members. When we come together for holidays, birthdays, etc. and sit across the table from one another feelings and tensions are heightened. Chances are you occasionally sit across from a family member who is not full of grace. We don't always approach those meetings with a Yes face. Our lack of willingness is partially memory failure – forget all that we brought to the table – how badly we limp.

We are only enabled and equipped by the mercy of God. That's when we ask the question that David asked. "Is there anyone to whom I can show the same kind of grace that God has shown to me?"

God's promise to us is Phillipians 1:6 – "He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it." How much more quickly that process goes when we stop thinking we have it figured out and remember who we are - sinners saved by grace, transformed into children of the King.

#### **Illustration #5 – Quote from Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis**

"The real Son of God is at your side. He is beginning to turn you into the same kind of thing as Himself. He is beginning to speak, to 'inject' His kind of life and thought..... into you; beginning to turn the tin soldier into a live man. The part of you that does not like it is the part that is still tin."

#### **Illustration #6 – Special Guest**

Have you ever been invited to someone's home for dinner and when you arrive it is evident that great preparation has been made for your coming? The table is set beautifully, placecards are out and written in lovely calligraphy – one with your name on it, the food is beautiful in its presentation and delicious in its taste. The host/hostess spends the time inquiring of all the details of events in your life, all conversation focuses on her guests with genuine interest. All the signals point to the sincere desire of the host/hostess to welcome you, pamper you, and get to know you better.

**Illustration #7 – Quote from In The Grip of Grace by Max Lucado**  
“Ponder the achievement of God

He doesn't condone our sin, nor does he compromise his standard,

He doesn't ignore our rebellion, nor does he relax his demands,

Rather than dismiss our sins, he assumes our sin, and incredibly sentences Himself,

God's holiness is honored, our sin is punished... and we are redeemed.

God does what we cannot do so that we can be what we dare not dream, perfect before Him.”

**Illustration #8 – Woman Heading for Bed**  
(Best suited for Women's Leaders Council)

Mom said, “I'm tired, and it's getting late. I think I'll go to bed.”

She went to the kitchen to make sandwiches for next day's lunches, rinsed out the popcorn bowls, took meat out of the freezer for supper the following evening, checked the cereal box levels, filled the sugar container, put spoons and bowls on the table and set the coffee pot for brewing the next morning.

She then put some wet clothes into the dryer, put a load of clothes in the washer, ironed and shirt and secured a loose button. She picked up the game pieces left on the table and put the telephone book back into the drawer.

She watered the plants, emptied a wastebasket and hung up a towel to dry. She yawned and stretched and headed for the bedroom. She stopped by the desk and wrote a note to the teacher, counted out some cash for the field trip, and pulled a textbook out from hiding under the chair. She signed a birthday card for a friend, addressed and stamped the envelope, and wrote a quick list for the grocery store. She put both near her purse.

Mom then washed her face with 3-in-1 cleanser, put on her fine line minimizer and age fighting moisturizer, brushed and flossed her teeth and filed her nails.

Dad called out, "I thought you were going to bed."

"I'm on my way," she said. She put some water into the dog's dish and put the cat outside, and then made sure the doors were locked. She looked in on each of the kids, turned out their bedside lamp, hung up a shirt, threw some dirty socks in the hamper, and had a brief conversation with the one still up doing homework.

In her own room she set the alarm, laid out clothing for the next day, and straightened up the shoe rack. She added three things to her six most important things to do list. She said her prayers and visualized the accomplishment of her goals.

About that time, Dad turned off the TV and announced to no one in particular, "I'm going to bed." And he did ... without another thought.

### **Illustration #9 – *Gladiator*, The Movie** **(Best suited for Coed & Men's Leaders Council)**

Set in A.D. 180, *Gladiator* tells the story of General Maximus Decimus Meridius (played by Russell Crowe), who was about to be given reigning authority in Rome by the aging emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Before this could take place, however, the emperor's son, Commodus, killed his father in order to establish himself on the throne. He then ordered the murder of Maximus and his family. Maximus escaped, and the movie follows him as he is sold into slavery, becomes a nameless gladiator, and finally seeks justice against wicked Emperor Commodus.

The turning point comes late in the movie. After Maximus wins a great battle in the Coliseum, Emperor Commodus decides to meet this unknown gladiator face to face. The crowd watches as the emperor in full pomp strides with his soldiers onto the sands of the Coliseum.

The emperor asks the simple question: "What is your name?"

Maximus, streaked with blood and dirt from the battle, takes off his helmet and says: "My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius, commander of the Armies of the North, general of the Felix Legions, loyal servant to the true emperor, Marcus Aurelius, father to a murdered son, husband to a murdered wife. And I will have my vengeance, in this life or the next."

The crowd erupts with a deafening roar, while the emperor visibly shakes under the weight of the true identity of a man he thought was a mere slave. The emperor flees the Coliseum, only to face defeat and death later at the hands of Maximus.

### **Illustration #10 – Quote from John Ogilvie**

"Picture the Father reaching out with two arms. One is Christ through whom He reached out to redeem the world and now reaches us with power of cross. The other is the Holy Spirit who works in us, convincing us of Christ's atoning death and our forgiveness and giving us the gift of faith to respond.

With the two arms the Father draws us to His heart. Both are crucial; without the arm of the Holy Spirit it is impossible for us to understand what the arm of Christ has done and still does for us."

### **Illustration #11 – Quote from John Stott**

"Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the life-giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christ-likeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead."

### **Illustration #12 – Quote from "Think Like Jesus" by George Barna**

George Barna is a researcher used by government, business, and church leaders. He studies trends and beliefs in American culture.

Recent study of those who claim to be Christians showed some dramatic results. Seems that millions of people who accept Jesus as Savior, never really accept Him as Lord. They gladly accept His offer of eternal salvation, confess their sins and profess Him to be their Savior in order to gain God's acceptance and avoid judgment. But their spiritual development does not go any further.

They do not invest in life transformation to become a more viable reflection of who Jesus is. They don't allow the Spirit of God to work in their hearts and minds to influence who they become and how they live out their commitment to God. They are not asking themselves who they really are, they are not wearing the visible mark of the Holy Spirit.

### **Illustration #13 – Quote from D. L. Moody**

"I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."

### **Illustration #14**

Use for this illustration any family you know with adopted children who you can speak of generally. When children are adopted there are certain things that mark them with the identity of their new family. These parents waited many months/years for the adoption to occur, then waited \_\_\_ months for legal finalization, gave the children their name, brought them home to live with them, they now hear parents' voices as voices of instruction, they love them, they have written them into the will guaranteeing their inheritance.

This is how our adoption as God's children works, marked with His name, He lives with us, it is His voice that we hear, He guarantees our inheritance – our place in His kingdom.

### **Illustration #15 – The Hunter and the Bear**

Winter was coming on and a hunter went out into the forest to shoot a bear out of which he planned to make a warm coat. By and by he saw a bear coming toward him and raised his gun and took aim.

“Wait,” said the bear, “why do you want to shoot me?”

“Because I am cold,” said the hunter.

“But I am hungry,” the bear replied, “so maybe we can reach an agreement.”

In the end, the hunter was well enveloped with the bear’s fur and the bear had eaten his dinner. We always lose out when we try to compromise with sin. It will consume us in the end.

### **Illustration #16 – A. J. Gordon, Founder of Gordon Conwell Seminary**

Gordon was out walking, looking across a field at a house in the distance. Beside the house was what looked like a man pumping furiously at hand pump.

As Gordon watched, the man continued to pump at a tremendous rate, tirelessly, up and down, never slowing.

The remarkable sight drew him closer. When he was close enough to see clearly, he saw not a man at the pump, but a wooden painted figure. The arm pumping was hinged at elbow and the hand was wired to the pump handle. Water was pouring out, not because figure was pumping, but because it was an artesian well – the water was pumping the man.

This is how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. It isn’t because we make it happen; but rather because we allow it and don’t get in the way. All we have to do is keep our hand on the handle.

## **Illustration #17**

D. L. Moody was to have a campaign in England. An elderly pastor protested, "Why do we need this Mr. Moody? He's uneducated and inexperienced. Who does he think he is anyway? Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?"

A younger, wiser pastor rose and responded, "No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Mr. Moody."