



2019-2020 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 8

# Series Overview and Guides

JULY-AUGUST 2020

## Objective

*what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study*

That we engage wisely and faithfully in the smoothing process with those around us.

### STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another."

—Proverbs 27:17

"Instead, he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd's bag. Then, with his sling in his hand, he approached the Philistine."

—1 Samuel 17:40

"To those who are willing to be reasonably open...there will be a lasting, affirmative contribution made to their lives...Most of us don't like to be threatened and certainly most groups and institutions avoid it like the plague. That's all the more reason people...are needed [who] penetrate through our layers of self-deception and make us see the truth, even when it hurts."

—Jarrell McCracken

Forward to *You and Your Network*

## Premise

*why we are studying this*

God often uses people to accomplish certain kinds of refinements in us, and we must learn to draw near and allow people to help knock off our rough edges.

### STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"There are 'friends' who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother."

—Proverbs 18:24 (NLT)

"I think we are all so alone in what lies deepest in our souls, so unable to find the words and perhaps the courage to speak with unlocked hearts, that we do not know at all that it is the same with others."

—Sheldon Vanauken  
*A Severe Mercy*

## Theme

*what the study is about*

We can learn from and be blessed by others. We can serve, teach, and bless others as well. Yet this positive interaction requires a counter-cultural commitment to humility and wisdom. When humility and wisdom operate in one's soul: 1) people are loved constantly, 2) we engage and disengage with care, 3) we experience joy, and 4) God is glorified.

### STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since *love covers a multitude of sins*. [Proverbs 10:12]. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen."

—1 Peter 4:7-11



Frisco Bible Church  
*a redeemed community*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SERIES 8 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Each Christian must develop internal character, something that frankly takes the most work of any refining relationship. We naturally shirk this and hide behind success, failure, service, noise, and many other shields in order to avoid joining the Lord in the labor of our own sanctification.

OBJECTIVE

We become ever more useful.

THE J CURVE

“The shape of the letter J illustrates a simple yet elegant concept: Christians need to go down to come up. Not just once, but again and again. The everyday Christian life is dying to convenience, worldly success, and approval, only to be resurrected into repentance, humility, and hope. Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday. If we understand the J curve, we won’t be flummoxed when we miss a flight connection, fail to soothe a crying baby, or strike out when trying to help a homeless person.”

—Paul E. Miller  
*J Curve: Dying and Rising with Christ in Everyday Life*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we allow the Holy Spirit and others to smooth us for usefulness. Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 1: Refining One’s Relationship with Self

1. This series is the last in our annual theme, *No Stone Unturned*.
  - Discuss “no stone unturned.” What do you recall about the premise of this theme?
  - Review Colossians 3:16 together. What three relationships are alluded to in this verse?
2. Read the *Objective*, *Premise*, and *Theme* on the first page of this series packet.
  - Have you experienced a relationship which was both difficult and positive for you? Describe how this was possible.
  - Why are we naturally unwilling to let others “knock off our rough edges”?
3. Read the *Objective* of this week’s study, and then read Matthew 7:3-5.
  - What is the point of this story?
  - What should always be our motive? Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.
  - Why is this too often not our motive? What interferes?
4. What are some grace-enabled ways to be useful? Discuss, and then read Romans 12: 6-8.
  - Read Philippians 2:3-4. How does this attitude in our service bring glory to God?
  - What is a personal by-product of being useful with the right motive and attitude? Read Psalm 132:16 and John 10:10.
5. Discuss these “rough edges”. How are they smoothed through sanctification?
  - Planning our life. Read Proverbs 16:9.
  - Resenting adversity. Read Philippians 3:10. How does adversity help us grow stronger spiritually?
  - Wasting time. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1, and Ephesians 5:15-16.
  - Living materialistically. Read Luke 12:15-21.



SERIES 8 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 2: Refining One's Relationship with Those Who Went Before

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

### THEME

In a world that lacks any heroic context... in a world where indulgence and sin are exalted as heroic... in a world where fake heroes cannot fill the void in humans longing for patterns to follow... God provides an amazing resource in those who went before. The great heroic context waits for humble miners who will dig in and grow rich.

### OBJECTIVE

We take every advantage to learn from the past.

### ADEQUACY FOR PAST AND FUTURE

"Joy is not hypocrisy nor Pollyannaism. Joy is realistic. It knows that life is painted in light and dark colors – that it has its contrasts – but that growth can come in all these moods and times. Joy faces every situation with hope, faith, and a sure knowledge that there has been adequacy for the past and that same adequacy is available, and even more so, for the future."

—Fred Smith  
*You and Your Network*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we learn and grow from our predecessors in the faith.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. Read 1 Peter 1:10-12 together. There is a long historical context to our faith.
  - Describe an historical Christian figure whose influence you appreciate.
  - Read Proverbs 1:8-9. If you had believing parents, what instruction did you receive from them that has benefitted you?
2. What traits of those who have gone before us in the faith should we admire and emulate?
  - Read Hebrews 11:4-9. What was the defining characteristic of these people?
  - Read verses 13-16. What was their default perspective of their circumstances?
  - Have you ever considered, and striven for, the traits by which you want your life to be defined? Discuss the successes and challenges.
3. Read Romans 15:4. How can serious study of Old Testament characters such as those mentioned in Hebrews 11 help to shape our lives today?
4. Read Hebrews 11:39-40. What encouragement do you glean from this when you consider your present circumstances?
5. Hebrews 12:1-2 brings a balance to the study of other historical figures in the faith. Why is it important to look to Jesus as our primary role model?



SERIES 8 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 3: Refining One's Relationship with Friends

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Relationships bring pain. Anyone who says otherwise is selling something or believes social media is accurate. However, there are still important reasons to have friends and partners – not least that our relationships glorify God, who exists in Triune relationship. We must make friends, and do so wisely.

OBJECTIVE

We are friends who glorify God.

POP-PSYCHOLOGY PROMOTES SELF

"Pop psychology [is always producing] a new wave of self-help books that advocate asserting yourself, doing your own thing, taking advantage of the other person before the other person takes advantage of you, and telling anyone who does not give you what you 'need' in your relationship to get lost. The movement is never entirely new. Arrogance has been around for some time."

—Alan McGinnis  
*The Friendship Factor*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we glorify God with purposeful friendships.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. What is the difference between an acquaintance you've known for years and a good friend?
  - Read Proverbs 27:17. How can friendships make you a better person?
  - Read Romans 15:5-6. How can friendships glorify God?
2. Why should we nurture good friendships?
  - Read Proverbs 27:6. What does it mean by "the wounds of a friend"?
  - Read verse 9. Describe a time when you benefitted from the wise advice of a friend.
3. What traits are important in a good friend?
  - Read Proverbs 27:6. What does it mean by "the wounds of a friend"?
  - Read verse 9. Describe a time when you benefitted from the wise advice of a friend.
4. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and Matthew 5:37.
  - What is the danger of being business partners with one who is not a believer?
  - What are the effects of good friends who are like-minded believers?
5. Read Deuteronomy 13:6-8.
  - Which relationship should be our most important one? Why?
  - How does putting God first in your life make you a good friend candidate? Discuss how Galatians 5:22 applies to friendships.
6. Read Proverbs 27:17 again.
  - How do common uses of technology today work against the principle in this verse?
  - Why does friendship require true engagement? What are some ways to make that happen?



SERIES 8 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 4: Refining Relationships in the Home

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

### KEY IDEAS

#### THEME

Each person has inherent relationships built in through family. Each relationship in the family brings opportunities to grow – opportunities that must not be missed.

#### OBJECTIVE

We grow through family.

#### LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

It's easy to promise yourself you'll never turn into your parents. But once you've had kids, you slowly see the transformation take hold. Then one day you catch yourself delivering the same speech that your dad used to give you when you were a kid. Seventy percent of adults surveyed admitted they often catch themselves mid-sentence and think they sound like their mother or father. Though this may make you feel your age, let's be honest, advice like 'you can never have too many pairs of clean underwear' and 'never take sweets from strangers' stand the test of time.

—Seema Iyer  
"Sharing Your Parents' Wisdom"  
*FQ Magazine*

### PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we would be prayerfully intentional in our relationships with family.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. Have you experienced a memorable time of personal growth due to a family relationship? Describe to the group.
2. Read Ephesians 6:1-3.
  - As a child, what is your responsibility in the relationship with your parents?
  - How does that responsibility change as you become an adult? How does it not change?
  - What are some ways to continue to honor your parents as they become elderly?
3. Read Ephesians 6:4.
  - As a parent, what is your responsibility in the relationship with your children?
  - How does that responsibility change as your child becomes an adult? How does it not change?
  - What are some ways to continue to refine your relationship with your children as they grow into adults?
4. Read Proverbs 1:8-9. What parental instruction have you received and have passed on to the following generation, whether as children or as adults?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 12:14 and 1 Timothy 5:4. Discuss how the relationship between parents and children is refined over time with respect to finances.
6. If you have been married for a while, how have you and your spouse refined each other and your relationship over the years? How has this affected your faith and your daily walk with Christ?



SERIES 8 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



# Session 5: Refining Relationships with Difficult People

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

There are problem people all around. They pop up in our churches, families, workplaces, governments, and even in the mirror. The main types that are operative today are the contentious, the fearful, those afflicted with mental illness, and deconstructionists. How should we respond? God calls us to firmness regarding right & wrong, compassion, and humility.

OBJECTIVE

We love rightly.

DECONSTRUCTION

“Scripture speaks strongly against those who destroy – not tearing down in order to rebuild better – no, the Bible describes the one who just deconstructs. Isaiah 21:2 is specifically addressing a judgment on Babylon, but it summarizes the problem and pain of deconstruction.”

—Wayne Braudrick

ISAIAH 21:2

“A troubling vision is declared to me: ‘The treacherous one acts treacherously, and the destroyer destroys.’”

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we love others rightly, especially when it’s not easy.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. Recall a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What did you learn about yourself through that experience?
2. Four challenging types of people were discussed: contentious, fearful, mentally ill, and deconstructionists.
  - With which of these do you find yourself avoiding relationships? Consider and describe why.
  - Read Proverbs 26:20-21. What does this teach us about dealing with contentious people?
  - Discuss effective ways of building a relationship with a believer who is habitually fearful. What about with a fearful unbeliever?
  - How should we speak, think, and act in our relationships with difficult people? Read Ephesians 4:29-32 together and discuss how to apply these verses to such relationships.
3. Read Proverbs 4:18-27. Why is it important to be firm regarding right and wrong when dealing with irregular people? What are the possible dangers if we are not firm?
4. Truth should not exclude love or compassion. Read Psalm 116:5.
  - Describe a time when it was hard for you to be compassionate while navigating a relationship with a difficult person.
  - Read 1 Kings 3:7 and Matthew 18:2-4. How does childlike humility aid us in being compassionate?
5. If you are currently dealing with a difficult person, how can this group pray for you?



SERIES 8 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 6: Refining Relationships When Life Breaks Down

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures in Luke

### KEY IDEAS

#### THEME

Relationships under pressure are frightening and fascinating. They can either fray or become stronger. There is often little in-between – something I learned when working in the hospital and as a lifeguard. In crisis, there are important personal lessons to learn and equally significant blessings to bestow on others.

#### OBJECTIVE

We overcome evil with good.

#### GOD'S MERCIFUL MESSAGE

"God has a merciful message in all such disasters. The message is that we are all sinners, bound for destruction, and disasters are a gracious summons from God to repent and be saved while there is still time...

I think that's God's message for the world in this coronavirus outbreak. He is calling the world to repentance while there's still time."

—John Piper  
*Coronavirus and Christ*

### PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we overcome evil with good, especially during difficult times.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. Most of us have faced the challenges of hard times, both of living through personal suffering or hardship, and of living through surrounding chaos.
  - Have you ever learned a "life lesson" from such times? If so, describe what you learned.
  - In the midst of such experiences, did you consider what you could offer to others? Discuss.
2. Read Luke 6:20-23.
  - What comfort does Jesus say we should have during personal hardship in this life? Why?
  - How do verses 24-26 relate to the common saying, "God wants you to be happy"?
  - What is the biblical perspective which should govern a Christian's life?
3. Read Luke 6:27-36. When under personal attack, how can we offer unconditional love and mercy to our antagonists?
4. Read John 9:1-3.
  - What is the lesson Jesus teaches his disciples?
  - When things aren't "right," why is it easier for us to assign blame than to trust the sovereignty of God?
  - Read Deuteronomy 29:29a. Why doesn't God reveal all of His plans and purposes?
5. How do you react to acts of evil against others, or catastrophic loss of life?
  - Read Luke 13:1-5. How does Jesus turn the conversation?
  - Discuss how Jesus' exhortation "repent or perish" could be useful during the current pandemic.
  - What do we have to offer during such times? Discuss Romans 12:21 and John 9:4-5.





SERIES 4 | SESSION 7

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Christians are called to shape each other through the amazing power of love. In the lapidary machine of the church, that love is fleshed out via:

- Getting along together.
- Serving each other.
- Edifying one another.

OBJECTIVE

We get along, serve, and edify.

POLISHED STONES

"When our girls were young, we bought a lapidary machine, a device used to polish stones. We filled the cylinder with jagged rocks, sand and water, then set the machine on the front porch and turned it on. Slowly but steadily, the motor rotated the cylinder over and over and over and over. A few weeks later we opened the case and marveled at the transformation. The rough, jagged edges of the rocks had been worn down, leaving beautiful, polished stones. We all have rough edges and need some burrs knocked off...[something] the Apostle Paul explains in Colossians 3:16."

—Dan Bolin  
*Refueling in Flight, No. 35*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week that we grow in love for each other by the grace of God.

## Session 7: Refining Relationships in the Church

1. There are fifty-nine "one another" exhortations in the New Testament.
  - Why does God lay such an emphasis on how Christians should relate to each other?
  - Are you intentional in how you relate to other believers, solely because they are believers? Why is this often difficult?
2. Seventeen of the fifty-nine exhortations are to love one another.
  - Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9. How does God teach us to love one another?
  - What are some descriptions of how we should love one another? Read Romans 12:10a, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, and 1 Peter 4:8.
3. The remaining "one anothers" fall into three general categories—ways we can love one another in practice: get along with, serve, and edify each other.
  - Which of these three general exhortations do you find most difficult? Discuss.
  - Perhaps they are all easy with some fellow saints and difficult with others. Why is it important that we be intentional with all?
  - When have you been the "another" and benefitted from someone being intentional with you?
4. Read the following verses together. How will living these out help us truly to get along?
  - Mark 9:50, Romans 12:10, Romans 14:13, 1 Corinthians 12:25, Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:13, and James 5:9.
5. How are we able to serve one another? What is the goal? Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.
6. Why is it important that we encourage each other and build each other up? Read Hebrews 10:24-25.
7. Consider the following opportunities. Answer one of them now and discuss with your group. Later, prayerfully consider and answer each one.
  - Whom do I need to better love? In what specific way?
  - With whom do I need to get along? What specifically needs to change?
  - Where can I specifically serve?
  - Whom can I build up? What is my plan to grow so I can edify others?

