#### **Key Scriptures**

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Proverbs 16:3 NIV

"Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:14-15 NIV

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings." 1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15 NIV

"18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 1 Corinthians 6:18 NIV

"... you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out." Numbers 32:23 NIV

<u>Build Relationships</u> - The goal of this time is to help your group bond together.

- Consider starting with one of the following options:
  - o Find a fun game to help people get to know each other.
  - O Have some snacks and allow people to mingle. Provide an icebreaker question to help people chat.

<u>Start Talking</u> - The goal of this time is to help people ease into having serious conversation with each other.

- Read Proverbs 16:3
  - O Question: Ask your group members to share about an upcoming decision or plan that is weighing on them. It could be anything from needing to buy a new car to figuring out how to handle something with their kid. What kind of process do they use to help them determine what the best choice is.

<u>Watch Content</u> - Spend the next 10-15 minutes watching the teaching video.

<u>Talk about Temptation</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the reality of temptation in our lives.

- **Question:** Read 1 Peter 5:8 and James 1:13-15. What do these two passages teach us about temptation and how it works?
  - O These passages show us at least two big ideas. First, temptation usually starts small and grows. It starts as a desire in our hearts. If we don't stop it there, it grows and becomes something that is much harder to control. The 1 Peter passage helps us see that our spiritual enemies are looking for opportunities to tempt us. Often this means that temptation comes at the most inopportune times.
- Question: When do you find that you are most susceptible to temptation?
  - O Temptation can be triggered by all sorts of things. Understanding what tends to spark temptation in your life can be very helpful in creating a plan to fight it. A good places to begin in understanding when you are most susceptible to temptation is SHALT (Stressed, Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired).

#### **Leader's Lesson Notes**

- **Question:** Do agree that we tend to over-estimate our ability to fight off temptation? Why do you think that is so?
- Group Reflection: Ask your group to consider the areas of their lives where they are most vulnerable to temptation. Ask people to write down those areas on their participants guide. Give them a few minutes to reflect. Allow people to share if they want, but don't force it.

<u>Talk about How to Fight Temptation</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the three keys to fighting temptation.

- Question: What have you found to be the most effective ways to fight temptation in your life?
- Question: Pastor James mentioned three keys to fighting temptation. They are moving the line, magnifying the costs, and having an escape plan already in place. Which of these areas is easiest for you? Which is hardest?
- **Group Reflection:** Ask you group to consider the areas of temptation they wrote down previously. Ask them to spend a couple of minutes working on a plan to fight that temptation. How will they move the line? How will they magnify the costs? What is their escape plan? Ask people to share if they are willing.

<u>Take Action</u> - Encourage your group to act on what they have learned today by taking one or more of the following steps.

- Say: This week, pre-decide how you'll respond to temptation by moving the line, magnifying the cost, and planning your escape. Here are some ways you can live into this.
  - o Find a trusted friend, could even be someone in this group, share about a temptation you are struggling with and how you plan to implement the steps necessary to be ready to fight it. Ask them to follow up with you in a few days and then a few weeks.
  - o Start the <u>Habits Bible Plan</u> using the YouVersion Bible App.

<u>Pray Together</u> - Gather prayer requests and find a way to have your group pray for each other. Either break into smaller groups or go around the circle and give everyone a chance to pray if they would like. You can close with the following prayer.

**Pray**: Father, we know that it can be easy to give in to temptation. Thank You for giving us the power to pre-decide how we'll respond in these situations. Please remind us of the values You've placed on our hearts so that our decisions aren't based on momentary emotions. In Jesus' name, amen.

#### **Key Scriptures**

"Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy." Daniel 6:4 NLT

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." Titus 2:11-14 NIV

<u>Build Relationships</u> - The goal of this time is to help your group bond together.

- Consider starting with one of the following options:
  - o Find a fun game to help people get to know each other.
  - O Have some snacks and allow people to mingle. Provide an icebreaker question to help people chat as they mingle.

<u>Start Talking</u> - The goal of this time is to help people ease into serious conversation.

- Read Daniel 6:4 in the NLT (see left column)
  - O Question: Daniel set a high standard when it comes to consistency. It says he was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. Can you think of an area in your life you would like to be more consistent in?
  - **Question:** What do you think would be different if you demonstrated more consistency in that part of your life?

<u>Watch Content</u> - Spend the next 10-15 minutes watching the teaching video.

<u>Talk about Self Control</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the value of self-control.

- **Question:** Why is self-control, or consistency, such an important character trait to develop?
- **Question:** Read Titus 2:11-14. What does this passage teach us about self-control?
  - O This passage talks about self-control in two parts. Self-control is doing what we should and not doing what we shouldn't.
- Question: What is harder for you, to regularly do the things you should do, or to regularly not do the things you shouldn't? Why do you think that is?
- **Group Reflection:** Ask your group members to identify one area in their life they feel like God would want them to be more consistent in. Have them write down what that area is. Give them a minute to think about it.

#### **Leader's Lesson Notes**

<u>Talk about How to Grow in Self-Control</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on how to grow in self-control.

- Question: Consider the area you just identified as God wanting you to be more consistent in. What is your "why" for choosing this area?
  - We really want people to think deeply about their why for being consistent. Push with follow up questions if people aren't getting this one.
- Question: What does it look like to fall in love with the process of something we are trying to be consistent at?
  - O A good example would pairing your quiet time with something else you really enjoy. Maybe you take a walk and do your quiet time at a park bench along the way. Maybe you love coffee or baked goods so you always sit down with a cup of coffee and scone for your quiet time. This helps you love the process.
- Group Reflection: Ask your group to consider the area they identified as wanting to grow in consistency. Have them write out their answers to these three questions on their participants guide: Why do you want to be consistent in that area? What are you going to do when you fail? How can you fall in love the process?

<u>Take Action</u> - Encourage your group to act on what they have learned today by taking one or more of the following steps.

- Say: This week, pre-decide that you are going to be consistent. You can make this happen by....
  - o Find a trusted friend, could even be someone in this group, to share about an area you struggle to be consistent in. Share with them how you plan to work on it. Ask them for their perspective and for prayer and to follow up with you in a few days and then a few weeks.
  - o Read "Your Future Self Will Thank You: Secrets to Self-Control from the Bible and Brain Science (A Guide for Sinners, Quitters, and Procrastinators)" by Drew Dyck.

<u>Pray Together</u> - Gather prayer requests and find a way to have your group pray for each other. Either break into smaller groups or go around the circle and give everyone a chance to pray if they would like. You can close with the following prayer.

**Pray**: Father, being consistent can be challenging. Please show us where we need more consistency in our lives. Remind us that it's through Your strength that we can be consistent. We're ready to honor You today, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen..

#### **Key Scriptures**

"Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches" 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 NIV

"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead." Phil 3:7-11 NIV

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:1-18 NIV

<u>Build Relationships</u> - The goal of this time is to help your group bond together.

- Consider starting with one of the following options:
  - o Find a fun game to help people get to know each other.
  - O Have some snacks and allow people to mingle. Provide an icebreaker question to help people chat as they mingle.

**Start Talking** - The goal of this time is to help people ease into serious conversation with each other.

- Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28
  - O Question: How do you think it would change your view of God if you went through all of the things Paul went through?

<u>Watch Content</u> - Spend the next 10-15 minutes watching the teaching video.

<u>Talk about Philippians 3:7-11</u> Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the this passage of scripture.

- Question: Why do you think Paul was able to stay faithful during his intense times of pain and suffering?
- Read Phil 3:7-11
- Question: Can someone summarize what we just read?
- Question: What do you think Paul means when he says "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord?"
  - O Paul is referring to the fact that knowing Jesus provides us with eternal life, gives us community in the church, that the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit guides us, comforts us, provides supernatural peace. That God helps build and direct our lives in a way that is wiser than we will ever be. Additionally, there is that inexplainable reality that the God of the universe dwells in us and gives us new life.
- **Question:** How do we develop the same type of passion for knowing Jesus that Paul had?
  - O Some answers might be; prayer, studying scripture, trying to find ways to trust him in our every day life, being a part of community, worship, serving others, etc.
- Group Reflection: Ask your group members to honestly reflect on this question: In what ways are you trying to build a deep and lasting knowledge of Jesus in your life? Write down your answer on your participants guide.

#### **Leader's Lesson Notes**

<u>Talk about Romans 5:1-8</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on this passage of scripture.

- Read Roans 5:1-8
- Question: What is most shocking to you about this passage? Why?
- **Question:** What do you think Paul means in verse 3?
- **Question:** Ask someone to try and sum up Romans 5:8 in non-religious terms.
- Group Reflection: Ask your group to take a minute or two and reflect on this question: do you feel like your closeness to Jesus and understanding of him is sufficient to help you stay faithful through hard times? If no, what needs to change? If yes, how can you keep it up? Have them write down their answers on their participants guide. Ask if anyone is willing to share, but don't push it.

<u>Take Action</u> - Encourage your group to act on what they have learned today by taking one or more of the following steps.

- Say: This week, pre-decide that you are going to be faithful, no matter what happens to you. To help you in this area, consider doing one of the following things.
  - O Take a short spiritual retreat. Set aside 2-3 hours where you can read, pray, and be alone with God. Use this time specifically to help you grow in your understanding of Jesus. If you choose this option, email pastor James and ask him to send you a suggested guide for a short spiritual retreat.
  - o Identify 2-3 trusted and wise Christian friends who will be people you reach out to when you are going through times of pain and suffering. Consider calling one or two of them this week just to see how they are doing.

<u>Pray Together</u> - Gather prayer requests and find a way to have your group pray for each other. Either break into smaller groups or go around the circle and give everyone a chance to pray if they would like. You can close with the following prayer.

**Pray**: Father, I know that we cannot predict what will happen to us in this life. I pray that you help us develop a deep and strong enough understanding of you that we will be committed to being faithful to you, even in the hardest times. Amen.

#### **Key Scriptures**

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:31 NIV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.." John 15:1-8 NIV

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-47 NIV

<u>Build Relationships</u> - The goal of this time is to help your group bond together.

- Consider starting with one of the following options:
  - o Find a fun game to help people get to know each other.
  - O Have some snacks and allow people to mingle. Provide an icebreaker question to help people chat as they mingle.

**Start Talking -** *The goal of this time is to help people ease into serious conversation with each other.* 

- Read Matthew 6:31
  - O **Question:** What do you think it means for us to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness?" On a scale of 1-10 how would you say you doing at "seeking first his kingdom?"

<u>Watch Content</u> - Spend the next 10-15 minutes watching the teaching video.

<u>Talk about John 15:1-8</u> Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the this passage of scripture.

- Read John 15:1-8
- Question: Can someone summarize what we just read for us?
- Question: What do you think it means to "remain in" Jesus? Why does Jesus tell us this is an important thing to do?
  - O The big idea is that we are trying to stay connected to Jesus. Our faith cannot survive outside of a connection to Jesus. Some of things this includes are: prayer, studying and cherishing God's Word, worship, etc.
- Question: What do you think it means to bear fruit in this instance?
  - O Bearing fruit is the idea that our life produces the types of things that come from following Jesus. Good examples of this are loving others, serving, the fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:22-23), etc.
- Question: What does it practically look like for us "remain in" Jesus?
  - O This could include anything from spending time in prayer and scripture, worship, intentionally obeying Jesus, looking for his guidance in our decisions, including Jesus in how we raise of our families, and many other things.

#### **Key Scriptures**

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35 NIV

"And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. and I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."

But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." Luke 12:16-21 NIV

"But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity." Isa 32:8 NLT

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." Mal 3:10 NIV

"The craving of a sluggard will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing." Pr 21:25–26

<u>Build Relationships</u> - The goal of this time is to help your group bond together.

- Consider starting with one of the following options:
  - o Find a fun game to help people get to know each other.
  - O Have some snacks and allow people to mingle. Provide an icebreaker question to help people chat as they mingle.

**Start Talking** - The goal of this time is to help people ease into serious conversation with each other.

- Read Acts 20:35
  - O Question: How have you experienced Jesus words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?"

<u>Watch Content</u> - Spend the next 10-15 minutes watching the teaching video.

<u>Talk about Luke 12:16-21</u> Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the this passage of scripture.

- Read Luke 12:16-21
- Question: What do you think the point of Jesus' story is? In what ways do people in our culture make the same mistake as the rich man?
  - O We need to be careful that we don't make our life all about building our own possessions at the expense of becoming rich toward God.
- **Question:** What do you think it means to be "rich toward God?"
  - O You might want to follow up by asking, "how does generosity relate to being rich toward God?" The big idea here is that being rich toward God is when God is worth more to us than anything else. This absolutely entails us being generous. If God and his priorities are of tremendous value to us, we will use our worldly wealth in pursuit of God's priorities. Jesus says, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:34)
- Group Reflection: Ask your group members to spend a minute reflecting by writing down their answer to this question on their participants guide: What is currently a more important priority for you, accumulating possessions for yourself or becoming rich toward God? What is a next step you need to take?

#### **Leader's Lesson Notes**

<u>Talk about Generosity</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the importance of Generosity.

- Say: Scripture consistently portrays generosity as a major priority that God has for his people. Traditionally, God's people have intentionally planned to be generous through the practice of a tithe.
- Question: How can practicing a tithe be good for our souls?
  - o For one, it helps us live into God's priorities. God's priorities are good for our souls. Additionally, setting aside a percentage of your income for generosity puts parameters on our lives that can be good for our souls. It can force us to learn to appreciate what we already have more, develop contentment, learn more effective priorities, and confront the realities of greed and covetousness in our lives
- **Question:** What do you think keeps us from practicing the kind of generosity that Jesus encourages?
- **Group Reflection:** Pastor James said you need to learn to be generous when you have less if you are going to be the type of person who is generous when you have more. Ask your group to take a minute and reflect on this question: What is a step you can take to work toward practicing intentional generosity this week?

<u>Take Action</u> - Encourage your group to act on what they have learned today by taking one or more of the following steps.

- Say: This week, pre-decide that you are going to be a radically generous person. Make a plan to be generous now because learning to be generous now helps us be generous in the future. To help, try doing one of these things this week.
  - o Write out your budget this week. Start by prioritizing a percentage of your income to generosity. 10% is a great amount to prioritize because it is a large enough amount that it helps force you to organize other parts of your life differently so generosity can be a priority.
  - o Find a copy of *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn and read it. Even better, find another person from your growth group to read it with.

<u>Pray Together</u> - Gather prayer requests and find a way to have your group pray for each other. Either break into smaller groups or go around the circle and give everyone a chance to pray if they would like. You can close with the following prayer.

**Pray**: Lord, you are our ultimate treasure. We know that where our treasure is, there our hearts will be. So help us put our treasure into your priorities so that our hearts will align with yours. Amen.

#### **Leader's Lesson Notes**

<u>Talk about Acts 2:42-47</u> - Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on this passage of scripture.

- Read Acts 2:42-47
- **Question:** What strikes you about this passage? Why?
- Question: What were the things these early Christians were doing together? Why do you think those things were important for them to do?
  - O Try to tie this back to the idea of remaining in Jesus. The early Christians were trying to remain in Jesus together.
- Question: What does it look like for us to do those types of things in today's world and why are they important for us? Are there any things in your life you need to give less attention to to be able to find time for the things that help us stay connected to Jesus?
  - o Again, try to tie this back to the idea of remaining in Jesus.
- Group Reflection: Ask your group to take a minute to think about the application from the video teaching. Ask them to write out a plan for how they are going to try to stay connected to Jesus? The plan needs to include the following; a time each day, a place, and the process of what they plan to do.

<u>Take Action</u> - Encourage your group to act on what they have learned today by taking one or more of the following steps.

- Say: This week, pre-decide that you are going to be fully devoted the Jesus and that you are going to try to find time each day to stay connected to him. To help you do that, you can.
  - O Call someone in the group this week and tell them the plan you made to help you stay connected to Jesus. Tell them the specifics and ask them to follow up with you in a few days to see how its going.
  - o Find a Bible reading plan on the Youversion Bible App to help you consistently read God's Word.

<u>Pray Together</u> - Gather prayer requests and find a way to have your group pray for each other. Either break into smaller groups or go around the circle and give everyone a chance to pray if they would like. You can close with the following prayer.

**Pray**: Lord, we thank you for being a God that wants to keep a connection with us. Knowing you is good and we want to know you more. We pray you give us the motivation and discipline to find time to stay connected to you. Help us this week to bear fruit as we stay connected to you. Amen.

#### **Key Scriptures**

"For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge." 1 Cor 8:10-11 NIV

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of vour ministry.

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." 2 Tim 4:1-8 NIV

"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace." ACTS 20:24.

An important note: The discussion time for the last week of this series is intentionally shorter so that your group can spend extra time building relationships. Consider setting aside extra time at the end of your time to help people cement the relationships they have been been forming. At the end of this study guide are several suggestions for how you might do that.

<u>Build Relationships</u> - The goal of this time is to help your group bond together.

- Consider starting with one of the following options:
  - o Find a fun game to help people get to know each other.
  - O Have some snacks and allow people to mingle. Provide an icebreaker question to help people chat as they mingle.

<u>Start Talking</u> - The goal of this time is to help people ease into serious conversation with each other.

- Read 1 Corinthians 8:10-11
  - O **Question:** What's your typical attitude when you're starting something new, as compared to when you need to finish something up?

<u>Watch Content</u> - Spend the next 10-15 minutes watching the teaching video.

<u>Talk about 2 Timothy 4:1-8</u> Spend a few minutes helping your group reflect on the this passage of scripture.

- Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8
- **Question:** What types of things do you think would have kept Timothy from finishing well? What types of things keep us from finishing well?
- **Question:** What are some of the things you think every Christian is called to?
- Group Reflection: Ask your group members to spend a minute reflecting by writing down their answer to this question on their participants guide: Pastor James mentioned that the first part of finishing well is simply to take the next step, meaning that when we find ourselves drifting from our purposes in Christ to recenter and take another step in the direction Jesus wants us to go. Consider the different things Jesus has called us to that we just talked about. Is there an area you have drifted from and need to take the next step in?

#### **Leader's Lesson Notes**

<u>Take Action</u> - Encourage your group to act on what they have learned today by taking one or more of the following steps.

- **Say:** This week, pre-decide that you are committed to finishing well. You can live into this decision this week by...
  - o Find someone in your group you plan to continue a relationship with. Call them this week and ask them these questions about their walk with Jesus. Make sure you answer these questions for them as well.
    - How are things with you and your family?
    - How's your walk with Jesus?
    - Are there anythings I can pray for you about?
  - o Find a copy of *Finishing Our Course with Joy* by JI Packer. Read it with someone from your group.

# Extra Bonding Time - Try to create a space for your group members to lean into the relationships they have been building.

- Consider doing one of the following options to help your group members create deeper and lasting relationships:
  - o Break into groups of 3-4. It could be gender based, or just based on how friendships have formed in the group. Ask each person to share the biggest thing they are taking away from this sermon and small group series. What steps do they plan to take to help that realization become a reality?
  - O Plan a get-together. Have your group brainstorm an outing or fun activity and then together, make a plan so that it actually happens.
  - O Spend some time deciding together what your group plans to do for the next few months. Please consult the content guide found at 4fcc.org/gg-content.

<u>Pray Together</u> - Gather prayer requests and find a way to have your group pray for each other. Either break into smaller groups or go around the circle and give everyone a chance to pray if they would like. You can close with the following prayer.

**Pray**: Father, it's often easy for us to start new things, but finishing those things takes perseverance. Please show us the things in our lives that You are calling us to finish. Help us refuse to quit—we are pre-deciding that we are finishers like You. In Jesus' name, amen.