

# Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends

*Beyond the Bio: The Invitation to Presence and Intimacy, September 15, 2019*

## The Big Idea

For many Christians, the phrase “a personal relationship with Jesus” is very familiar, although some find it surprising that this particular phrase is not actually in Scripture. While those exact words and phrasing may not appear in a particular chapter and verse, it is clear throughout the Bible that mankind was created to be in relationship with our Creator. The Bible tells us that God is our Father and we are treasured by Him. The good news is that this personal relationship with Jesus is not as difficult to obtain as we might think. Jesus invited the

## Where we are in the Bible

In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the book of John we see the call of Jesus’ first disciples in verses 35-42. As John the Baptist’s disciples begin to follow Jesus, Jesus challenges their motives by asking “What do you want?” He probed them to find out if they were motivated by idle curiosity or by a real desire to know him. And finally, he invites them to become acquainted with him and to spend time with him. At the conclusion of that day, we read of the response of one of these disciples to believe and to share the good news of what he had discovered with his brother - the disciple we would come to know as Peter.

## Other scriptures to consider

Exodus 33:7-23  
John 10:27-28  
John 17:13-19  
John 18:36  
Philippians 3:17-21

## Finding a bit of ourselves

- Think about those who you consider to be your best friends. What was the process involved for them to move from strangers to acquaintances to friends to close friends?
- Consider your relationship with Jesus as compared to your closest friend. How would you compare the two? Is one of those relationships easier to maintain than the other? Why or why not?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your relationship with Jesus?

## Where do we go from here?

- In John 1:38 Jesus asks the two disciples of John the Baptist who were now following him, “What do you want?” How did they respond and what did it eventually lead to? Now – if Jesus were to ask you that same question, what would be your response? What does your answer reveal about your spiritual priorities?
- Taking time to settle and sit in God’s presence might seem like a waste of time to some – or at least a major disruption to our schedule. What are your thoughts on this quote from Kenneth Boa from his book *Life in the Presence of God*: “There is no shalom (deep peace in our lives and relationships) without Shabbat (sabbath rest), and no growth without dedicated time with God?” Are there other ways to a personal relationship?
- In the sermon there were several suggestions of ways to encourage a deeper relationship with Jesus. Were there any of those practices you could try? Are there other habits or practices you have tried in the past that draw you closer to Christ? If a closer relationship with Jesus is a priority of yours, what can you do beginning this week to be more intentional and regular in moving closer to him?



## Prayer focus

Be sure to take time this week to settle quietly and seek God's presence first and foremost. Meditate on...

- The awesome power of God - The Creator of everything that exists.
- The gentleness and kindness of the one who is called our Good Shepherd.
- The sacrificial love of Christ who died so that we might live.
- The leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts and prayers.

