

## Show Up

*An unexpected intersection of God's divine desires  
and our impassioned longings*

(A 60-minute group session on the sacred purpose of car shows.)



### Lesson in unity

Something peculiar happens when groups of car folks get together. Before heading to a car show, or while they're out on a Friday night cruise, or during a 1,000-mile vintage rally, this peculiar occasion is inevitable: the gas station stop. Even if you've never participated in one of these things, you may have seen a row of muscle cars topping off at the pump together, or sport bikes downshifting into the same gas station, or ground-scraping imports parked together at the same convenience store. The togetherness is key here. You know the stereotype about ladies using the bathroom together, or guys sharing cigars together during special occasions? Its corollary in the car world is the group gas station run, because car folks get gas together.

Car folks get gas together, really. And why not? The best aspects of car culture center on togetherness. Before the internet, car ownership clubs recruited new members by placing ads in car magazines and before that, they kept in touch and shared advice via mail correspondence. Today, you can learn everything there is to know about your BMW M8 by joining online forums and following its hashtags on Instagram. People display decals of their social media handles on their cars to connect and continue the conversation online.

When the time comes to meet up, though, nothing beats the informal, non-juried car shows. Also known as meet-ups, the cruise-in, show 'n' shine, Cars & Coffee, cruise night, cruising the strip. No one profits, no one really organizes. No one forces participation. Yet because human action is driven by a motivating force, and that motivation comes from desire, people show up.

# John V 16

## **Group participation/questions:**

- What unofficial meet-ups have you been part of? (Examples: A Friday evening happy hour with coworkers, Saturday nights at the mall or movie theater, an exercise group, a regular coffee group before church)
- What motivated you to do that?
- Do you still do it, or not, and why?

## **Lesson in unity**

The Biblical book of Deuteronomy covers Moses repeating the laws God gave. The repetition is interwoven with sincerity and urgency, since elderly Moses was in the process of transferring leadership to Joshua. Moses had seen God's people tortured and killed while they were enslaved in Egypt, and knew the constantly growing physical and spiritual threat from neighboring nations. They were refugees. Because of this, some of the language sounds harsh to our ears today (at this time, God's covenant was with a small group of people in order to establish them as a foundation for His truth, promises, and law, which Jesus would ultimately fulfill, dramatically expanding "God's people" to include all people who believe in God, regardless of nationality). Moses repeated the 10 Commandments and then shared the Greatest Commandment: "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), after which he shared how God would indeed bring the Israelites into the land they were entering to possess – displacing "seven nations larger and stronger than you (Deuteronomy 7:1). Then he shared these words:

*(Ask someone to read Deuteronomy 7:6-9)*

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the least of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands."

## **Group participation/questions:**

- What does this passage say about the desires of Moses? (Examples: For God to be with him in his leadership, for God to bless and protect the Israelites)
- Or the desires of the Israelites? (Examples: For God to give them an identity and purpose, for stability)
- Or the desires of God? (Examples: for Moses to lead faithfully, for the Israelites to understand and receive his love)
- What does it say about unity?

# John V 16

## Lesson in unity

Today, God doesn't instruct his followers to conquer nations or destroy people in order to establish unity. Throughout the New Testament, God warns of the destructive forces of sin – fear, brokenness, hopelessness, arrogance, vice, independence, shame, and hatred – and how unity among believers is necessary for facing them. Since all humans sin and suffer the effects of a sinful world, God urges people today to share the only hope people can have: hope in restoration through Jesus.

Yet our work deteriorates when we work alone, because we weren't meant to work alone. Matthew 28:19-20 contain the words Jesus gave as he was ascending into Heaven. It's a command along the same lines of what Moses commanded in Deuteronomy.

*(Ask someone to read Matthew 28:19-20)*

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

This directive has been called “The Great Commission.” If you have thought of “commission” as something you must “commit” to by yourself, it may be helpful to think of it instead as a co-mission.

In their journey together, Christ-following brothers and sisters can talk about the places where their struggles and triumphs overlap. They can learn things they had never thought about trying, or learn from members of the faith no longer with us, whose examples in the Bible and throughout history have highlighted the common need for communal dependency, and the heartbreak when it took tragedy, loss, and ruin to learn a lesson that could have been understood through a conversation with a friend. Common ground is important here. Don't ignore a person because their beliefs differ slightly or they don't seem like they're “good enough” to be included. Romans 14:1 gives some insight: “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.”

God's people are supposed to work together. When Paul encouraged the church of Galatia to “Carry each other's burdens,” (Galatians 6:2) he was painting a word picture of suspension. Think of the suspension on a car, or a bicycle, or the springs in an old couch. They're supposed to work together to carry weight and/or face bumps in the road. Everyone feels flattened and compressed sometimes. Everyone carries some kind of weight, and hits pot holes and speed bumps. When Christ-followers suffer alone with a burden that's supposed to be shared, it feels awful. When people don't burden themselves with someone else's pain, they miss out on the harmony God intended for His people. Sometimes, Christ followers try to be a super-strong suspension that operates by itself, or ignore the burdens of someone else because they're expected to just get stronger and deal with their own weight. Besides, they're over there on the other side of the car. They can figure out their own problems, right? Wrong.

# John V 16

## **Group participation/questions:**

- When have you relied on someone else to help you with a heavy weight or a bump in the road?
- When has someone relied on you?
- What do you do to try and make yourself stronger and independent instead of asking someone for help?
- Do you think people desire change, healing, or peace enough to ask for help with it?

## **A lesson in God's desire**

It's easy to misunderstand God. Hearing the 10 Commandments can be as discouraging as reading entrance requirements into an elite car club or fancy college that is impossible to get into. Reading about faithful, effective leaders like Moses and Joshua causes that sting of regret over leadership failures in our family, work, or school. But what if this was a sign of God's love? Again, what if God loved his people enough to use that regret to turn them around? What if that feeling of a heavy burden was intended to change our thinking and focus to Jesus, who can take away that burden?

*(Ask someone to read 2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

You may have heard the first verse of that famous passage. However, you probably didn't know that its Biblical context, including that second verse, makes it a lesson on unity. We aren't expected to become complete by ourselves, or for ourselves. God made us complete through Christ's sacrifice, and he wants us to join with other new creations and be “Christ's ambassadors.” We were made to be new creations so we could talk to people about seeking God and becoming new creations. We are new creations together. And what do ambassadors do if not talk? Yet talking should be a desire, not a duty. The idea that someone needs a theological degree before talking to people is like saying only experienced automotive engineers and accomplished race car drivers can drive to the grocery store.

Talking is what Jesus did the most of. He talked while feeding and healing people. He talked to people who were considered unworthy or unclean. He talked about how he talked his way through temptation (Luke 4:1-13), citing Scripture to combat the sneaky persuasion of the devil, and then talked to his disciples about it to teach them how to respond to temptation. He even talked about how to talk to God (Matthew 6:9-13). Talking to someone can be a little scary. It takes some intentional vulnerability, but that's where the good stuff is. That's where growth happens. And, that's God's purpose: for people to grow together.

It's becoming clear why people desire things: as creations of God and in the image of God, desire is transferred from God to humans.

# John V 16

## **Group participation/questions:**

- So, those 10 Commandments that make people sweat sometimes? Well, they're ultimately about love, not duty. That's a right/wrong, follower/deviant way of looking at it. Jesus directly addressed this when someone asked him about the greatest commandment and he said "love." (Matthew 22:36-37)
- Most importantly, God desires our rejection of desires that don't lead to Him. Through prayer, we can surrender those broken desires and redirect our desires to God. And God, who knows and cares deeply about each person's individual desires, listens and will answer.
- What else does God desire?

## **Sample desires:**

- For redemption for his people, to "draw all men to myself." (John 12:32)
- Restoration, not punishment, of sinful and broken people: "A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." (Psalm 51:17)
- Action through the sending and implementing of God's word: "It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11
- Presence with humanity: "And [Jesus] said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.'" Luke 22:15
- After hearing about the unity God desires, the healing that comes when people work together, and the empowerment you have with people as Christ's new creation, what do you want to do next?
- What are people's desires, and how is the Church poised to meet these desires?

## **Go! Final instruction**

Joshua began his leadership with the famous Battle of Jericho, which begins with these words:

*(Ask someone to read Joshua 6:1-2)*

"Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.'" (Joshua 6:1-2)

Although Israel had laid siege to Jericho, no fighting had begun. Yet God uses the past tense, "delivered," to describe just how confident Joshua could be in this victory. It's only after this announcement of victory that God describes how it's going to happen, including the famous marching, trumpets, and yelling. As in the days of Moses, God is with his people, desiring unity, desiring all people to turn to him, and desiring the work of a purposeful car show in a church parking lot.

## **Prayer**