

SESSION 3

Life Change Happens In Relationship

This session centers around the transformative power of relationships in our lives. We look at the story found in Luke 5:17–26, which highlights the impact of true friendship on the paralyzed man's encounter with Jesus. These faithful friends faced an obstacle when they couldn't find a way through the door to reach Jesus. Undeterred, they demonstrated unwavering determination by taking an unconventional route—scaling the roof and lowering their paralyzed friend to Jesus. This powerful example showcases the profound change that can occur when we have compassionate and supportive relationships that lead us to encounter the love and healing of Jesus in remarkable ways.

Core Value 3: Life Change Happens In Relationship

We see a church filled with disciples who are relentless in their pursuit of God-honoring, life-changing relationships with other believers. We recognize that following Jesus is not meant to be done alone and that only through relationships with others can we live out the commands of Jesus and experience the life to the full that Jesus gives us (*John 10:10*). In a world that is growing more disconnected than ever before, we will be a different kind of people who willingly choose to do life with one another, depend on one another, pray for one another, provide for one another, and encourage one another each day (*1 Thessalonians 5:11*).

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:11



LUKE 5:17-26

Read Aloud in Your Group

¹⁷ One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” ²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’ ²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”





FOR DISCUSSION

Life Change Happens In Relationship

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION: Who was your best friend growing up?

1. What led the paralyzed man's friends to bring him to Jesus? Reflect on the motivations and intentions behind their actions.
2. How do the friends' actions demonstrate the qualities of true friendship and faith? Discuss the impact of their determination and willingness to go to great lengths to help their friend.
3. How can this story inspire us to be more compassionate and proactive in helping others encounter Jesus in their time of need?
4. In what ways can we apply the lessons from Luke 5:17–26 to our own relationships and interactions with others? Discuss how this story can inform our actions and attitudes towards those in need.
5. What does "Life Change Happens In Relationship" mean to you personally?
6. In what ways have you personally experienced or witnessed life change through relationships with others?
7. How can we integrate the principle of "Life Change Happens In Relationship" into our outreach and mission efforts as a group?
8. How can the principles of "Life Change Happens In Relationship" be applied in our families, workplaces, and everyday interactions?

GROUP EXERCISE:

When you look back over your life, you will quickly notice that the most formative periods of your life coincide with the most important people you have met and been impacted by. On the timeline below, chart the most important seasons of your life above the line (For example: college, career, marriage, parenting, ministry, etc.) and the most important people of your life (For example: a teacher, coach, mentor, pastor, or friend) below the line. Try to see if you can draw any connections and if life change has truly happened in relationship.

Top 5 Most Important periods of my life



Top 5 Most important people of my life



CORE VALUE IN ACTION

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Jeremy's testimony is of God's faithfulness working in and through families of the body of Christ through trying times.

He grew up in an unsteady household. At the age of three, his parents divorced. His mom had remarried, and this new season was brought on by more challenges. For some time, his parents had struggled with substance abuse. On top of that, his stepdad had a hot temper and addictive personality, fighting against his sinful nature of alcoholism and sexual addiction, often resulting in physical and emotional abuse to family members. This pattern led to frequent visits from law enforcement. This was how it was. But God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (*Psalms 46:1*). God's help and strength were about to come in those times of trouble.

Some legal trouble had taken place, and this actually allowed his parents a fresh start. While his stepdad continued giving in to his sinful nature, his mom started her journey of faith. Jeremy and his family discovered Calvary when he was in the 6th grade. His parents joined a home group through Calvary, and with the home group knowing and praying for Jeremy's family, men in the small group presented themselves as spiritual and father figures for Jeremy. While hard times continued into middle school, families of the home group always encouraged Jeremy's family, allowing their homes to be a place of escape in times of need.



Though many didn't know about the family dynamics, many people made Jeremy feel welcome:

- Jason McMaster
- Roger and Debbie Williams hosted middle school bible studies at their home
- J.D. Laske led him through middle and high school ministry ISI (Iron Sharpens Iron) groups
- Kirk DeWitt
- Amadeus Vadonis, Calvary's missionary partner from Germany
- Worship team leaders, and many more

Calvary became the place of refuge for Jeremy and his family.

Many showed what sacrificial service is. What stood out to Jeremy and what he'll always remember is the overflow of love expressed in simple, yet consistent connections. These relationships left a deep impact. They showed Jeremy how life, marriage, and fatherhood could be. Showing the true meaning of service to God, these relationships changed Jeremy's life. It motivates Jeremy to turn his pain into purpose and be present in and out of the church body for all ages.

Life change truly happened to him because of those relationships.

