

LEAN IN

SOMEWHERE TO START

Lean In

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

Part 4 - "Finding Your Thing"

November 20th, 2016

Bottom Line: *As you do "your thing," the church does "the thing."*

Study Verses: *Ephesians 2:8-10, 2 Corinthians 5:14-20, Proverbs 16:1-3, Colossians 3:12-17*

Define The Win: *Rather than being weighed down by the stress of finding "their thing," group members would feel the freedom to be curious and explore how their lives can serve as an expression of God's love. They would also understand how their willingness to "lean in" and serve contributes to the overall impact of their church community. Participants would see themselves as carrying the integrity and image of Christ with them wherever they go.*

Key Points

- *The way you find "your thing" is by first doing "a thing."*
- *Don't mistake trivia with depth.*
- *If the love of Christ doesn't compel us, something else will.*
- *God is reconciling the world to Himself and He is using us to do it.*
- *Our life should be an expression - not a power grab.*
- *The challenge is to take our attention off ourselves and fix our eyes on the needs of others.*

ENCOUNTER

- If the love of Christ doesn't compel us, something else will. What fuels people to serve and help others? For those who don't know Christ, how can their heart for service reveal to them about being hard wired for God?
- How much stress and angst do you feel (or have felt) about finding "your thing"? Where does this pressure come from?
- Don't mistake trivia with depth. How is the depth we crave in our relationship with God found in stepping into opportunities to serve others?

FORMATION

- Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What does it mean to be "God's handiwork"? How should understanding our identity in Christ influence our tendency to boast in our work, accomplishments and impact?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-20 (The Message). God has given us the task of telling everyone what He is doing. How do you define reconciliation? How does the work we do accomplish the task of reconciling the world to God?
- Read Proverbs 16:1-3. Why is it important to test our motives for "leaning in" and serving others? What are some indicators that one's motives are off base and not rooted in the right heart set?
- Read Colossians 3:12-17. Whatever you do, do it all in the name of Jesus. How does this statement take the pressure off of finding "your thing" and allow you to be curious, lean in and start somewhere?

EXPRESSION

- How has your view of the importance of your contribution to the overall impact of our community changed over the course of this series?
- Where have you grown curious and decided to "lean in" to the issues you see all around you?
- Have you found "your thing"? How has your life begun to serve as an expression of Christ's love?

LEADER INSIGHT: *At one point or another, we've wrestled with the questions of "Why am I here?" and "What is my purpose?" We all want our life to count. We all desire to make a difference and leave our mark on this world. Yet, the pressure to find "our thing" can overwhelm us. Rather than launching us into action, we*

hesitate and collapse under the weight of our calling. Terrified of not measuring up or, even worse, going down the wrong path, we remain inactive and paralyzed. We reason that it is better to do nothing than expend energy doing the wrong thing.

With this mindset, curiosity is not allowed. In fact, it can be viewed as very dangerous. But, God calls us to freedom. This freedom isn't just experienced through the forgiveness of our sins, but also a freedom to serve and for our lives to stand as a reflection of His love. God is far less concerned about the specifics of our activity than He is about our authenticity, availability and access. He desires to use us in unique and different ways. This statement shouldn't create more pressure, but lessen the burden to have everything figured out. All God is asking from us is to start somewhere and lean in.

We are hardwired to serve others and look outside ourselves. This is true for everyone, believer or skeptic, follower of Christ or individual who wants nothing to do with God. During those moments where we give ourselves away, we are living out how we were made. They point to something deep within us that wants nothing more than to express God's heart.

As people who have encountered the love of Christ personally, we get the opportunity to be His ambassadors in this world. God is reconciling the world to Himself and He is using us to do it. Our life should be an expression - not a power grab. We should be looking for ways to give rather than take. The challenge is to turn our attention off ourselves and fix our eyes on the needs of others.

It involves looking at the things that make our hearts come alive and devoting our time and energy towards these ventures. It requires taking the time to notice what our gifts, talents, interests and passions are and figuring out ways they can be used to advance His Kingdom rather than our agenda. It entails looking around us and recognizing places where we've been given influence and a platform and leveraging them to make His name known. It is understanding how "our thing" contributes to the overall impact of the church we call home. And, it is trusting that the depth we crave in our walk with God is found when we are willing to step into opportunities to serve others.