



## BELOW THE SURFACE

### **Below The Surface**

### **Part 2 - "Living From What's Below"**

Small Group Material

July 2nd, 2017

Leader Guide

**Bottom Line:** *The best way to express God's work is to share God's work.*

**Study Verses:** *Psalm 86:11, Galatians 6:4-6 (The Message), Romans 8:28*

**Define The Win:** *Participants will examine their connection level with others and how it is influencing their growth and transformation. They will understand that their willingness to be self-aware and self-assess is for the benefit of not just themselves, but others. Group members would avail themselves to others by being honest about their struggles.*

### **Key Points**

- *We learn His ways in order to trust His ways.*
- *We bring ourselves and our stories together not to impress each other, but to express God's image - His character, His grace, and His love.*
- *We need to connect authentically in relationships that are based on our dependence upon God and each other.*
- *Togetherness isn't first about effectiveness, but rather expression.*
- *Self-assessment is not just knowing where you are, but knowing what God is doing in you where you are.*
- *Authentic encounters require authentic people, effort and trust.*
- *Don't just show up...avail yourself. First to God then to others.*
- *Think redemption not solution.*

- *We enter into a generous common life by serving as an expression of His character and extension of His heart.*
- *When we see things from His perspective, His purpose comes into focus.*
- *We have to think differently about what is good. (Romans 8:28)*

### **ENCOUNTER**

- **"I'll get myself right, then God will love me and use me." Over the years how have you wrestled with this lie and in what ways has this kept you on the sidelines?**
- **What does it look like to become independently dependent on God?**
- **How does our perspective of our problems change when we begin to think redemption rather than solutions?**

### **FORMATION**

- **Read Psalm 86:11. What causes a heart to be divided? How does our growth and transformation lead us to places where faith is required?**
- **Read Galatians 6:4-6 (The Message). What is self-sufficient maturity and how does exhibiting this quality enable us to enter a generous common life?**
- **Read Romans 8:28. Do you believe that God works everything out for our good? Why or why not? What makes the circumstances one is going through "good"?**

### **EXPRESSION**

- **We tend to be more concerned with impression (how am I viewed by others) rather than expression (how do others see God in my actions and words). Where are you most prone to focus on impression instead of expression?**
- **If you change what you see, you will change what you do. Where are your eyes currently set? What areas of your life are in need of a perspective shift?**
- **There are four corners of connection: (1) no connection (2) bad connection (3) pseudo connection (4) real connection. In the relationships that hold the most influence on your life, what corner are you residing in and how is your current connection level influencing your growth?**

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *Often the only time we pay attention to the condition of our hearts is when something is wrong. Many of us desire for God to change us, but only to a point. We want Him to fix us so we don't annoy others, can handle life on our own and do what we want. Once the problems subside, we go back to business as usual until we inevitably repeat the process all over again.*

*This cycle causes us to distance ourselves from God and those around us. We fall for the lie that we have to clean ourselves up and get our life together before we are worthy of His love. Until then, God will not use us. With this perceived pressure on our shoulders, we look for solutions for our problems. We search for quick fixes. We desire to arrive at a place where our issues are fixed and we don't have to rely on anyone but ourselves. Yet, a walk with God requires faith. God always pushes us to places where we will need to rely on His faithfulness and the support of others.*

*We are all hardwired for connection. We were made for community. Yet, we struggle to truly connect with others in a way that is authentic, transparent and vulnerable. Every relationship resides in one of four corners of connection. The first corner is simply a lack of connection where one is disconnected from everyone. Making your home in this corner leads to feelings of loneliness and depression. If one ventures out from this place, they often head to the second corner, which is a bad connection. They reason that a bad connection is better than no connection at all. Finding yourself in this place is to know anxiety. Your identity is wrapped up in how you perform and measure up to others. When things don't go right, you feel judged and condemned.*

*If the individual doesn't retreat back to the first corner as a result, they will reside in the third corner or better known as pseudo connection. This place is infamous for being the land of comfort, escapism and addiction. People set up shop in an effort to mask all their pain even if it only provides temporary relief. The last corner is where we all desire to call home. It is the land of real connection where you are loved and accepted just as you are. It doesn't mean that conflict doesn't exist but when you reside here you are able to hear and confront difficult things knowing you are safe. In our relationships, we must move to the fourth corner and be the type of person who shows compassion and grace.*

*We bring ourselves and our stories together not to impress each other, but to express God's image - His character, His grace and His love. Change happens when we connect authentically in relationships that are based on our dependence upon God and each other. Authentic encounters require authentic people, effort and trust. We need to avail ourselves and show up in our relationships. We enter into a generous common life by serving as an expression of His character and extension of His heart. The best way to express God's work is to share God's work.*