



## Relationship with God - Session 1: Walk in the Light

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Overview:** (Leaders: Please read to your group before the Opening Prayer)

In these 8 sessions we will be exploring our personal relationships with God. Tonight our video begins where Mike Chamberland asks us if and how we are "Walking in the Light". As Mike talks about what it means to Walk in the Light, I invite you to consider those times in your life where you felt great peace and see if that connects in any way with what Mike has to share with us tonight. Let's start our session by beginning with a brief moment of silence. Take this time to shake off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remember that God is always with us.

### Opening Prayer:

Read: **John 12:35** and **1 John 1:5**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Heavenly Father, help us to walk in the light so as to draw closer to You. May we be open, humble, and ready for the changes You need us to make to grow as Your disciples. May our steps be filled with intent as we journey forward and may we walk in the light better today than we did yesterday. Amen.*

### Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. What does 1 John 1:5 mean to you, "Now this is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all."?

**YouTube:** Walk in the Light with Mike Chamberland (7:13 Min) -

[https://youtu.be/a6hXmgecdOs?list=PL26Izh\\_ym\\_HPxDjwBV87ZR25eDFMzSde](https://youtu.be/a6hXmgecdOs?list=PL26Izh_ym_HPxDjwBV87ZR25eDFMzSde)

### Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. Do you have any initial thoughts/feelings that struck you while watching the video?
3. What did you think about the quote shared in the video about competing and comparing things to yourself over and above others? (*Quote: If you want to be champion, compete. If you want to be a great champion, compete against great competitors. If you want to be the greatest champion, compete against yourself.*)
4. What is one thing you feel you have done this past year to walk in the light?
5. A great way to measure our growth in holiness and light is to consider if we exhibit more of the fruits of the Spirit today than yesterday or a week ago or a year ago. (Leader: Take a moment to read the fruits of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23 and discuss concrete things that can be done or sacrifices that can be made to increase in these fruits "In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.")
6. What is something you would like to intentionally take on this next week/month/year to encourage your walk in the light?

### Session Challenge:

- Read Galatians 5:22-23 each day and ask, "How can I be more loving, joyful, peaceful, forbearing, kind, good, faithful today?"

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Heavenly Father, You have called us out of darkness. You have called us to walk in the light - to walk in Your light. Please enlighten our minds, enflame our hearts, and ignite our wills so that we may follow You more perfectly. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and Your many fruits and gifts so we may be a blessing to all those we encounter each day. Amen.*



## Relationship with God - Session 2: Who is Jesus?

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: Matthew 16:13-20**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Dear Father, as we gather tonight, we want to thank You for an opportunity to meet again as a group this week. We pray for our ears and hearts to be opened so we may come to understand who You are and who we are to You. Continue to watch over us and help us to feel the love You wish to shower over us. We ask this in Your name. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. In the reading today, why do you think Jesus instructed the disciples to not tell others He was the Messiah?
2. Who do you say Jesus is?

**YouTube Video:** Who is Jesus? by Matthew Kelly (6:16 Min)- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0ZguZJFrao>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

3. Matthew Kelly referenced C.S. Lewis when he said “We have 3 choices when it comes to Jesus: he’s either a liar, a lunatic, or the Messiah he claims to be.” What are your thoughts on these 3 choices?
4. Matthew Kelly spoke about how society tragically wants to reduce Jesus to 'just a nice guy.' What do you think about this? Does it matter?"
5. What aspects of the evidence presented did you find convincing/not convincing?
6. After this video, how would you answer, “the Jesus question: Who do you say I am”?

### **Session Challenge:**

- Reflect on this Scripture verse - “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:16-17)

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of faith in our lives. Your goodness and grace are endless. Help us to align our lives with Your purposes. Guide us as we walk with unwavering faith in You. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so we may become vibrant signs of your existence in this world. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*



## Relationship with God - Session 3: Why Did Jesus Have to Die the Way He Did?

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us. We will read two readings today. One from the old testament and one from the new. As they are read, consider how elements found in the story of Abraham preparing to sacrifice his son foreshadow the details of Jesus' death in the Gospel of John.

**Read: Genesis 22:1-18 and John 19:1-42**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer: (Said together as a group): *Dear Jesus, You willingly died for me. Your sacrificial love is beyond my comprehension. Through Your life and death on earth You have forever connected divinity to humanity. For this gift, I am both awestruck and humbly grateful. Thank You for Your gift of pure love and Your desire for me to be with You in heaven for eternity. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. What elements did you find similar in both of the readings? Why do you think/feel God stopped Abraham from killing his son but allowed His own son to die?

**YouTube Video:** Why Did Jesus Have to Die the Way He Did? by Bishop Barron (4:37 Min) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtcKV65-9uY>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

2. Do you think/feel Jesus would have been received differently if He were not born of humble origins?
3. How does Jesus continue to awaken resistance within you and within the broader culture?
4. Bishop Barron points out examples of human opposition to Jesus (forms of human dysfunction):
  - Explicit betrayal of Judas (turn your back on your mentor)
  - More subtle forms like Peter who denies that he knows Jesus
  - The disciples who fall asleep at his moment of truth (sloth)
  - Pontius Pilate who knows the truth but won't follow through on it
  - The incredible brutality of the temple guards or Roman guards (physical abuse)
  - Those who would mock him even as he hangs dying
  - Betrayal, Denial, sloth, injustice/disorder, turn from truth, physical abuse, mockingWhich forms of betrayal resonate with you? Someone you know? Our world?
5. Jesus says "Shalom" and "peace" to those who abandoned Him. We killed God and he still loves us. What does that say about how we should treat our brothers and sisters?
6. What does the cross mean to you? Did your thoughts change after watching this video?

### **Session Challenges:** {Choose one or both}

- Through Christ a perfect sacrifice has been given for our salvation. Evaluate how you living God's example through forgiveness of others and displaying His love through sacrifice?
- Read the following Catechism of the Catholic Church sections: CCC [456-460](#), [595-623](#). {Leaders may want to show members how to reference sections in the CCC – these can be found online at well at <https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM> }

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.) *Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Son, Jesus, and the loving relationship we can have with Him. Help us to choose Him as our "Lord and our God" today and every day going forward. Guide us as we grow stronger in our faith and live as devoted examples of Your peace, strength, and grace in this world. Open our eyes to ways we can serve others each day and die to self so that we may know true love and come to understand You better. Amen.*



## Relationship with God - Session 4: What is Sin?

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: 1 John 2:1-17**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Heavenly Father, open our eyes and minds to the areas in our life that need tending and healing. Help us to detest sin as it keeps us from being our truest self and ultimately keeps us from pleasing you. Help us to walk in the light and love our brother as You do. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. What do verses 1 John 2:9-11, mean to you “*Whoever says he is in the light, yet hates his brother, is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother remains in the light, and there is nothing in him to cause a fall. Whoever hates his brother is in darkness; he walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*”?

**YouTube Video:** What is Sin? with Fr. Mike Schmitz (6 Min) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3iOar7VieU>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

2. Before this video, how would you have explained “sin”? How has your perspective changed since watching this video?
3. How is it more or less helpful to think of sin as “intentionally breaking the relationship with God” or “hurting a friend of ours” instead of to think of sin as breaking a law or a commandment?
4. Fr. Mike Schmitz said sin is saying, 'God, I know what You want. I don't care. I want what I want.' Does this change how you look at what sin is?
5. Fr. Schmitz said “evil isn't a thing, it's an absence of a good or intentional distortion of a good” just like blindness or communication. How does this change your explanation of evil?
6. Did you know that God's will is to forgive you?
7. Have you ever thought of confession as “letting God forgive you” because he already wants to?

### **Session Challenges:** {Choose one or both}

- Let God forgive you this week and walk forward into your week with God at your side.
- Read and learn more about sin from the Catechism of the Catholic Church in sections 1849-1864.

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Dear Lord, we realize that sin has a ripple effect that many times cannot be seen by us. Help us to turn away from the sin in our lives. Open our eyes to clearly see the distortion and misuse of Your good. Reveal to us Your will, Your heart, and Your goodness. Draw us more deeply into Your heart so we can see when we hurt You and how we are breaking our relationship with You. Help us to choose what You want above our own desires, so we can make room for Your forgiveness to meet our hearts. Build our faith to turn away from fear and trust in Your goodness and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*



## Relationship with God - Session 5: The Struggle With Forgiveness

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: Matthew 18:21-35**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Jesus, I want to follow You. I want to learn from You. I want to go where You would have me go and do what You would have me do. Change my heart to one of a devoted disciple. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. What does this reading mean to you?

**YouTube Video:** I am struggling with forgiveness with Fr. John Bartunek, LC (5:51Min)-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3-J7hTTX3E>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

2. What are some general thoughts/feelings you have about what was said in this video?
3. What about this video do you find most challenging?
4. What about this video do you find most exciting and positive?
5. Do you find the distinction between emotion/feeling and decision difficult in your own life? Why do you think that is?
6. Fr. Bartunek encourages us to pray for those who have offended us to help our emotions catch up with our decision to forgive someone. What do you think about this?
7. Are you willing to share a time in your life when forgiveness was truly impactful?

### **Session Challenges:** {Choose one or both}

- Reflect on any resentment or anger you carry for those in your life you need to forgive. Pray for these people by name and ask God to give you His grace to heal you and forgive them.
- Read Catechism of the Catholic Church sections 976-983, and 2838-2845.

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Dear Jesus, we have burdens we carry. We lift up our hearts to You and offer our individual intentions that may be weighing heavy on our hearts at this time... {allow time for people to offer up any prayers for themselves or others} We pray for these intentions and those left unsaid. In your name Jesus Christ, Amen.*



## Relationship with God - Session 6: Will God Heal My Wounds?

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: 2 Cor 12:7b-10**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Dear Jesus, we come to You today wounded and weak. We willingly give You access to our hearts through our wounds. Shower us with the grace we need to walk in holiness in the midst of our weakness and we pray that Your power is made visible through our weakness. In Your Name. Amen*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. What does verse 2 Cor 12:9 "...My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me." mean to you?

**YouTube Video:** Will God Heal My Wounds? with Fr. Mike Schmitz (8:48 Min) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUzWbZWkh6A>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

2. Fr. Mike Schmitz says freedom is not the power to do what I want, it's the power to do what I ought to do. Does this resonate with you?
3. What comes to mind when you hear "God doesn't just heal us from our wounds; He can heal us through our wounds"?
4. Have you ever experienced, or witnessed someone being content with weakness?
5. How have you felt close to God in the midst of suffering? Have you experienced wounds as "God's access points to our hearts"?
6. How can you start living the freedom and power of "doing what I ought to do" today?

**Session Challenges:** {Choose one, two, or all}

- Pray on the thought that "when we are weak, we are strong."
- Read the Catechism of the Catholic Church sections 553 and 1445.
- Make an effort to attend confession this week as a step toward spiritual healing.

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Lord, if it's Your will that we live in the midst of our circumstances, if it's Your will that we are not healed from our wounds, if it's Your will that we experience woundedness, please help us to be content with our weakness for the sake of You, Lord, because when we are weak, we are strong. We lift up our hearts to You and offer our individual intentions that may be weighing heavy on our hearts at this time.... {allow time for people to offer up any prayers for themselves or others} We pray for these intentions and those left unsaid. In Your name, Jesus Christ, Amen.*



## Relationship with God - Session 7: On The Holy Spirit

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: Galatians 5:13-26**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer: (Optional – Leader may distribute copies of this prayer to each group member to pray together as a group. Print the 2nd sheet included to distribute)

Come, Holy Spirit. Prayer

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.*

*V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.*

*R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.*

*Let us pray.*

*O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. How is the Holy Spirit described in this reading? Who is the Holy Spirit to you?

**YouTube Video:** Bishop Barron on the Holy Spirit (12:02 Min) - <https://youtu.be/1INut0Gi09Q>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

2. Which fruits do you most readily see in your life? Which ones do you wish you saw more of? (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control)
3. What does it mean to you to be “spiritual?”
4. When have you felt true joy?
5. How can someone look at frustrating, irritating, or painful experiences as an occasion for love?
6. In what ways can someone be generous other than money?
7. How do you regularly welcome the Holy Spirit into your heart?
8. Was there anything else that stood out to you from this video that we haven’t discussed?

### **Session Challenges:** {Choose one or both}

- Take time this week to talk to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to come more deeply into your life.
- Read Catechism of the Catholic Church sections [691-704](#), [737-741](#)

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Dear Holy Spirit, You are the love that connects the Father and Son. Breathe a renewed vigor into our desire to draw closer to God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ. Help us to want the good of another, not for our own sake but for the sake of the other. Help us to see our interactions with others as an occasion for love. Make visible the path that will allow us to be the most generous. Help our faith to mature and help us to order our physical and spiritual energy to love. Holy Spirit, we desire Your peace and joy. Come, Holy Spirit, come. Renew our hearts and enkindle in us the fire of Your love. Amen.*

### **Come, Holy Spirit. Prayer**

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.*

*V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.*

*R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.*

*Let us pray.*

*O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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*Let us pray.*

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## Relationship with God - Session 8: Is God the Center of Your Life?

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

**Read: Leviticus 27:30, Proverbs 3:9, Ezekiel 44:30, 1 Cor 15:20-23, Romans 8:23, Romans 12:1**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer: (Optional – Leader may distribute copies of this prayer to each group member to pray together as a group.)

*God, help me to make You the center of my life. May I not be so foolish as to try and hide parts of my life from You. Give me the courage to give You everything that I am -- to give you a blank check. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. Each of these verses talks about “first fruits.” Did anything strike you as new or interesting as you heard them read?

**YouTube Video:** Fr. Mike Schmitz (4:35 Min) “Is God in the Center of Your Life?” - <https://youtu.be/O6kDFgaq4Pg>

### **Reflection or Discussion Questions:**

2. What does it mean to have God in the CENTER of your life?
3. Is God your priority or one of your “priorities?”
4. What happens to you when you make time with God the most important part of your day?
5. What are ways you can honor God with your money?
6. Does your faith influence what you listen to or watch on TV or the Internet?
7. What is one thing you’d like to start putting God ahead of?

### **Session Challenges:** {Choose one, two, three, or all}

- Choose one day of the week to put God first and evaluate how that day went.
- Prioritize God first by placing prayer time on your daily schedule.
- Identify if you can give 1% more of your money or time in direct service to God.
- Examine your entertainment sources and prioritize what you consume to those sources that will draw you closer to God.

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

*Dear God, help us to place You at the center of our lives. Reveal to us where we put other things in front of You, especially in how we spend our time and money and what we allow to enter our minds through media and other outlets. Grant us the insight to see clearly how we can always give You our first fruits and seek out what is holy and edifying. We lift up our hearts to You and offer our individual intentions that may be weighing heavy on our hearts at this time.... {allow time for people to offer up any prayers for themselves or others} We pray for these intentions and those left unsaid. In your name, Jesus Christ, Amen.*

