PARTICIPANT HANDOUT · EIGHT SESSIONS

Busy for God, or with Him?

Your notes for each session, a quick check and activity sheet for every session, and the Return log for the weeks in between.

> “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”
>
> John 15:4–5 (NIV)

Two operating systems. “I’m doing things for God” begins with effort. “I’m becoming with God” begins with attachment.

The Return

Abiding isn’t passive. It’s returning your heart’s attention to Jesus, again and again:

- **When you’re distracted,** return.
- **When you’re anxious,** return.
- **When you succeed,** return.
- **When you’re discouraged,** return.
- **When you fail,** return.

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Session 1: The Activity vs. the Abiding

JOHN 15:1–8

Read this out loud: Abiding isn't passive. It's returning, again and again, all day long.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ I judge a good day by how much I got done.
   ☐ I judge a good day by how near I stayed to Jesus.
2. ☐ I think about Jesus mostly at set times.
   ☐ I return to Jesus throughout the day.
3. ☐ When I'm busy, prayer is the first thing to go.
   ☐ When I'm busy, I pray more, not less.
4. ☐ I mostly ask, "What should I do today?"
   ☐ I mostly ask, "Where is Jesus leading today?"

THE DRIFT TEST

Times I returned in three minutes: _____

SAME LIST, TWO ENGINES

What I do in a normal week	D	W

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One D I could turn into a W this week:

1. Which operating system have you been running on lately? How can you tell?
2. Where in your day is it hardest to “return”? What pulls you away?
3. What would change this week if you measured your days by nearness to Jesus instead of productivity?

My notes

This week: The Return: five times a day, when you notice your attention has drifted, stop and say, “Jesus, I’m back.” Mark it on the Return log.

Before there is fruit, there is attachment.

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Session 2: The Service vs. the Surrender

LUKE 10:38–42 · ROMANS 12:1–2

Read this out loud: When a man truly walks with God, service becomes the overflow, not the substitute.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ I'd rather be doing something than sitting still with God.
   ☐ I can sit with Jesus without needing to be useful.
2. ☐ I notice when no one thanks me for serving.
   ☐ I serve the same whether or not I'm noticed.
3. ☐ My worship mostly happens through serving.
   ☐ My serving flows out of worship.
4. ☐ I offer God my work.
   ☐ I offer God myself, then my work.

THE APPLAUSE TEST

Where I serve most:

If no one ever noticed or thanked me, would I still do it the same way?

OPEN HANDS

What I'm holding onto, and offering to God first:

1. Are you more like Martha or Mary right now? Be honest.
2. Where do you serve partly because you're seen, thanked or needed?

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3. What would surrender look like before you serve this week?

My notes

This week: Before you serve anywhere this week, take five quiet minutes with Jesus first. Write down one thing you heard or noticed.

Serving is supposed to be the overflow of walking with God, not a substitute for it.

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Session 3: The Ministry vs. the Master

REVELATION 2:1–5 · MATTHEW 7:21–23

Read this out loud: The greatest threat to intimacy with Jesus isn't always sin. Sometimes it's being so busy for Him that you stop being with Him.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ I know more about God than I did a year ago, but I'm not closer.
   ☐ I'm closer to God than I was a year ago.
2. ☐ My time with God is mostly preparing to teach, lead or serve.
   ☐ I spend time with God just to be with Him.
3. ☐ My faith feels like a job.
   ☐ My faith feels like a relationship.
4. ☐ I'd struggle to name something Jesus has said to me lately.
   ☐ I can name something Jesus has said to me lately.

FIRST LOVE LINE

Mark the high point of your love for Jesus, and where it started to cool.

The year I came to faith — Today

What I did back then that I don't do now:

A LETTER FROM JESUS

"I know your deeds…"

"Yet I hold this against you…"

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“Remember… return… do the things you did at first.”

1. What “good thing” in your spiritual life is most at risk of replacing the best thing?
2. If Jesus wrote a letter to you like the one to Ephesus, what would He praise? What would He hold against you?
3. What did your “first love” for Jesus look like? What would it take to return to it?

My notes

This week: Read Revelation 2:4–5 each morning. Then do one thing you did when your love for Jesus was new.

Kingdom work is never meant to replace Kingdom relationship.

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Session 4: The Fruit vs. the Effort

JOHN 15:5, 8, 16 · GALATIANS 5:22–23

Read this out loud: Fruit isn't primarily activity. It's Christ's character becoming visible in you.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ When I fall short, I try harder.
   ☐ When I fall short, I stay closer to Jesus.
2. ☐ I measure fruit by results I can see.
   ☐ I measure fruit by Christ's character in me.
3. ☐ What I'm learning mostly stays with me.
   ☐ What I'm learning gets passed on to another man.
4. ☐ I'm patient only when I force myself to be.
   ☐ I see patience growing in me that I didn't force.

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FRUIT INVENTORY

Galatians 5:22–23	Strong	Growing	Hard to see
Love			
Joy			
Peace			
Forbearance			
Kindness			
Goodness			
Faithfulness			
Gentleness			
Self-control			

Where others see Christ in me:

Who my fruit might feed this season:

1. Which fruit of the Spirit is most visible in you right now? Which is hardest to see?
2. Where have you been trying to produce fruit by effort instead of abiding?
3. Who is one person God may want your fruit to feed this season?

My notes

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This week: Ask two people who know you well, “Where do you see Christ in me?” Write down what they say. Then plant one seed: share what God has been teaching you with one other man.

Formation was never the finish line. God forms men to send them.

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Session 5: The Performance vs. the Presence

EXODUS 33:7–18 · PSALM 27:4–8

Read this out loud: I'd rather stay with God than go anywhere without Him.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ When I pray, I mostly ask God to bless my plans.
   ☐ When I pray, I mostly want to be with Him.
2. ☐ I feel closest to God after I've done well.
   ☐ I feel close to God even after a bad week.
3. ☐ Silence makes me restless.
   ☐ Silence with God feels like rest.
4. ☐ I measure my faith by what I get done.
   ☐ I measure my faith by how near I stay.

STAGE OR TENT?

Where I perform	Where I'm present with God

MY ONE THING (PSALM 27:4 IN MY WORDS)

"One thing I ask of You, Lord..."

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1. What would you have done with God’s offer to Moses?
2. Where is your “tent outside the camp”? If you don’t have one, where could it be?
3. What is your “one thing” right now, honestly? What do you want it to be?

My notes

This week: Set a daily “tent” this week: the same place and time, ten minutes, phone in another room. Just be with Him.

The blessing without the Blesser isn’t worth having.

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Session 6: The Assignment vs. the Attachment

JOHN 21:15–19 · JOHN 20:19–22 · MATTHEW 28:18–20

Read this out loud: Before there is a mission, there is a Person.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ I start my day with my to-do list.
   ☐ I start my day with Jesus, then my list.
2. ☐ I serve to feel useful or worthy.
   ☐ I serve because I'm loved.
3. ☐ After I fail, I try to make up for it by doing more.
   ☐ After I fail, I come back to Jesus first.
4. ☐ My calling feels heavy.
   ☐ My calling feels like overflow.

MY ASSIGNMENT CARD

My biggest assignment right now:

Staying attached to Jesus while I do it looks like:

THE THREE QUESTIONS

"Do you love Jesus?" 1. Why I love Him. 2. What's in the way right now. 3. What loving Him looks like this week.

1. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times?

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2. Which of your assignments has drifted from attachment into burden?
3. What would it look like to hear “Do you love me?” before your next big task?

My notes

This week: Before each major task this week, pause and pray, “Jesus, I love You. I’m doing this with You.” Notice what changes.

Every assignment is meant to flow from attachment, not compensate for the lack of it.

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Session 7: The Work vs. the Walk

MICAH 6:6–8 · COLOSSIANS 2:6–7 · GENESIS 5:24

Read this out loud: I don't just want to work for God. I want to walk with Him.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ I do a lot for God, mostly on my own.
   ☐ I do what I do with God, in conversation.
2. ☐ My pace leaves no margin for people.
   ☐ My pace leaves room for interruptions.
3. ☐ I bring God my results.
   ☐ I bring God my company.
4. ☐ Grace got me started; now it's up to me.
   ☐ I keep walking in the same grace I started with.

PACE CHECK

Circle where your pace has been this month, then put an X where Jesus would set it.

Stopped Strolling Walking Rushing Sprinting

MICAH 6:8 CHECK

Area of life: _____

	1	2	3	4	5
Act justly					
Love mercy					
Walk humbly with God					

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One step to raise my lowest score:

1. If your life were summed up in one line like Enoch’s, what would it say right now?
2. Where are you working for God at a pace He never set?
3. What would walking humbly with God look like in your hardest relationship?

My notes

This week: Take one 20-minute walk this week with no headphones. Talk to God the whole way. Then take a walk with another man.

Work can be done alone. A walk is done with Someone.

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Session 8: The Sending vs. the Staying

JOHN 20:21 · MATTHEW 28:19–20 · ACTS 1:8

Read this out loud: God never intended for you to become a reservoir. He intended for you to become a river. What He pours into you was always meant to flow through you.

Quick check

For each pair, check the one that's more true of you right now.

1. ☐ I'm still waiting until I'm ready to help someone else grow.
   ☐ I'm helping someone grow, even while I'm growing.
2. ☐ My faith is mostly about what God is doing in me.
   ☐ My faith is also about what God wants to do through me.
3. ☐ I take in a lot: sermons, podcasts, books.
   ☐ I pass on what I take in.
4. ☐ I can't name a man who's stronger because of me.
   ☐ I can name a man who's stronger because of me.

WHO'S NEXT?

A man who is stronger because God placed me in his life:

A man God may be asking me to invest in next:

My first step, and when:

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21)

1. What has God poured into you over these eight weeks?
2. What's your "I'm still working on myself" excuse?

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3. Who is one man you will invest in, starting this week? What's the first step?

My notes

This week: Make the first move with the man on your "Who's next?" card: a call, a text, a meal. Then tell someone from this group you did it.

Transformation that stops with you was never the goal.

The Return log

Each day, tally how many times you noticed you'd drifted and returned to Jesus. Write one thing you noticed.

Day	Times I returned	What pulled me away	What I noticed
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

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