

CORE

Communities

a manual

The goal for Core Communities is to gather regularly with 3-5 people of the same gender, to press in together as disciples of Jesus, and to practice the most neglected commands, disciplines, and practices of the Christian life.

We don't want to be people who just hear the Word without putting it into practice, allowing deception into our lives. We believe the following 4 practices, often overlooked, can produce disproportionate spiritual fruit for the time and context in which we are called to follow Jesus. We hope this acronym will help you remember these practices, without the need for extensive study and curriculum.

CONFESSION

OTHERS

READING

ENCOURAGEMENT



## CONFESSION

...is not intended to create guilt, shame or condemnation, but rather to free us from it.

Sin, particularly secret and unconfessed sin, robs us of joy and confidence. But coming to God at His invitation to receive His grace and walk in freedom and forgiveness is life-altering. In our city, where it is so easy to be unaccountable while habits and patterns that move us away from our calling set in, confession is a gift.

As Bonhoeffer says, “Nothing can be more cruel than the leniency which abandons others to their sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one’s community back from the path of sin.” The guide that follows is a starting point for walking away from brokenness and into holiness.

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

*The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)*

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)*

<i>Struggle with:</i>	<i>Ask for:</i>
<i>Lust</i>	<i>Integrity</i>
<i>Pride</i>	<i>Humility</i>
<i>Sloth</i>	<i>Devotion</i>
<i>Envy</i>	<i>Gratitude</i>
<i>Wrath</i>	<i>Gentleness</i>
<i>Gluttony</i>	<i>Self-Control</i>
<i>Greed</i>	<i>Generosity</i>

The acts of the flesh are obvious:

Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, selfish ambition, jealousy, dissensions, and fits of rage.

The Fruit of the Spirit is:

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

*I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*(Galatians 5:19-21)*

### Discussion Questions

- Where have you wrestled with temptation this week?
- Have you given into temptation this week?
- What steps will you take to avoid temptation?
- Time in confession and worship.





## OTHERS

...is about making what is paramount to Jesus paramount to us: pursuing the lost.

Jesus said that He came to seek and save the lost, and we see Him moved with deep compassion for those far from God. Often, we may feel inadequate to share the gospel, or don't even know where to start. The goal of this section is to help you identify a person to whom God is leading you, and to pray for that person to come to know Christ. We cannot, and should not, coerce or manipulate people, but we do believe the Holy Spirit can make the gospel real and draw them to Jesus.

The prayers listed are all based on Scripture, and designed to be a starting point, not a formula. Along with prayer, we hope that you will see where God is moving in their life, and step out in love, faith, and obedience.

*In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:10)*

*Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:9-10)*

1. I pray, Lord, that You draw \_\_\_\_\_ to Yourself. (*John 6:44*)
2. I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ seeks to know You. (*Acts 17:27*)
3. I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ hears and believes the Word of God. (*1 Thes. 2:13*)
4. I ask You to prevent Satan from blinding \_\_\_\_\_ to the truth. (*2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26*)
5. Holy Spirit, I ask You to convict \_\_\_\_\_ of his/her sin and reveal his/her need for Christ's redemption. (*John 16:8; 1 Thes. 1:5*)
6. I ask You to send someone who will share the Gospel with \_\_\_\_\_. (*Matt. 9:37-38*)

7. I also ask that You give me (and/or my fellow disciple) the opportunity, the courage, and the right words to share the truth with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(*Col. 4:3-6; Eph. 6:19-20*)
8. Lord, I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ turns from his/her sin.  
(*1 Thes. 1:9-10*)
9. Lord, I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ would put all of his/her trust in Christ. (*John 1:12; 5:24*)
10. Lord, I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will confess Christ as Lord of his/her life, take root and grow in his/her faith, and bear much fruit for Your glory. (*Rom. 10:9-10; Col. 2:6-7; Luke 8:15*)

#### Discussion Questions

- Have you been loving toward and praying for \_\_\_\_\_ this week?
- Have you sensed God bringing you opportunities to love and share?
- What specific step will you take this week to influence \_\_\_\_\_ toward Jesus?
- Spend time praying together for the people God is putting on your heart.



## READING

...is about immersing ourselves in the Scriptures so we can know God's heart, hear His voice, and follow His will.

Jesus says that if we are His disciples, we will “abide in His word” (John 8:31; Matt. 4:4). Jesus wants us to study, meditate upon, memorize, obey, and fully live out the Scriptures – the Holy Word of God. It is the Bible that makes the Christian “wise for salvation” and that is sufficient for “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” so that we are “thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:15–17). Likewise, the writer of Hebrews says that the Scriptures are like a sword with which the Spirit does a deep, intricate soul-surgery.

With this in mind, we advocate two approaches done in tandem. First, we encourage a massive intake of Scripture (a book a week, read multiple times) to

saturate our minds with truth, so we think and value what Christ does. Second, we encourage you to pick a small section from each day's reading to study more in depth—by immersing yourself in the context and meaning, meditating upon the truth in these verses, and then bringing these verses before God to seek the immediate application for your life. (We refer to this method as the T.I.M.E. method.)

*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrew 4:12)*

*But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. (Luke 8:15)*

*Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither –  
whatever they do prospers.*  
(Psalm 1:1-3)

#### Discussion Questions

- Tell us about your reading this week.
- What stood out to you in this week's reading?
- Where convicted you in this week's reading?
- Where encouraged you in this week's reading?





## ENCOURAGEMENT

...is essential if we are going to live out the call of God on our lives. If confession is accountability for what we don't want to do, encouragement is fuel for what we are called to do.

To encourage is (literally) to put courage into someone. In our culture, we are often beat down, criticized, and challenged with discouraging circumstances and situations that cause us to lose heart, turn back, or give up.

This is a time to call out the gifts, passions, and vision that God has placed in our hearts to see His fame and deeds renewed and known in our time. Use this time to “put courage” into one another and to affirm the work God is doing and will continue to do in each of your lives.

*See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.*

*(Hebrews 3:12-14)*

*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together,*

*as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:19-25)*

### Discussion Questions

- What do you sense God doing in you that you need to respond to?
- What do you sense God doing around you that He is inviting you into?
- What do you sense God doing through you that you need courage for?
- As you listen to the Holy Spirit, what words or verses is He giving you to encourage the other members of your CORE group?









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