

ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS

- What are you telling yourself these days that if you told someone else they will think you have lost your mind? Is there someone in your life that you can share these thoughts with? What prevents us from having more of such people in our lives?
- What can you do to be someone whom someone else can be free to share the “crazy” thoughts going on in their hearts? Is there someone for whom you are willing for God to hold accountable for what they do with their “crazy” thoughts?
- How is “We” the best defense to deceitfulness of sin in “you”? How can you make your small group a place where we can stand together against the common enemy of our souls?

PRAYER

- Ask God to make your group a safe place where people are free to give others access to their hearts and also give permission speak to them if they drift in their hearts.
- “Barnabas” is someone to whom another can be open to about unsavory things in their lives and who can, without judgement, encourage people out of the drift in their heart. Ask God to give you a Barnabas. Ask God to make you a Barnabas to someone.



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WEEK OF JULY 9 – CIRCLES ARE BETTER THAN ROWS SERIES: CHURCH OF HIS VISION

NOTES

WARM UP / CONNECT

- Describe a time when you significantly inconvenienced yourself for someone? Why did you do it? How did you feel afterwards?
- Describe a commitment you made that you have not been able to maintain? What made it so hard to stay committed? Describe a commitment you have been able to keep. What made the difference?
- What's your favorite flavor of ice-cream and why? What do you think this says about you?

WORD

"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.**" Heb 3:12-13 (NIV)**

"Circles of Deep-spirited Friends" is the crucible where Christ is formed in the lives of those who have committed to follow Jesus. Because we drift, commitment is not enough to succeed in following Jesus. We need connections. **"Rows" don't show what "circles" know because a drifting heart does not show in rows.** It is therefore our responsibility to create an environment where we all can see to it that none of us who have committed to follow Jesus drifts away. Some ways we can do this include:

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW JESUS

"And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, **that they might be with Him and that He might send them** out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:" Mar 3:13-15 (NKJV)

Only someone who knows how hard it is to maintain a daily commitment to follow Jesus in every area of their lives can enter into a deep-spirited friendship with another person who has made a similar commitment. What does it take to make a commitment to follow Jesus in every area of life? How can one practice this on a daily basis? What will "being with Jesus" mean for you?

2. MAKE YOUR BOAT OR HOME AVAILABLE TO JESUS

"So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake... Then **He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's,** and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat." (Luk 5:1-3) "Now it happened, as He was dining in **Levi's house,** that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him." (Mark 2:15)

If we make our boats (businesses) or homes available to Jesus, we make it possible for Jesus to touch many more lives. What prevents you today from making your home or boat available to Jesus? What happens to people who are able to do this?

3. BE WILLING TO POUR OURSELVES INTO OTHERS

"Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out **Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.** When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and **encouraged them all** that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord...And a great many people were added to the Lord. **Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.** And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called **Christians in Antioch.** Act 11:22-26 (NKJV)

Circles of "deep-spirited friends" does not just happen! Like we see in Barnabas it is intentional, deliberate and requires personal sacrifice and inconvenience. What can motivate us to make this type of sacrifice and commitment? How can we be a "Barnabas" to someone? How can someone be a "Barnabas" to us?