

10.18.26 Small Group Lesson (Helping Others Identify God's Voice)

Welcome/Introduction (10 Minutes)

Leader: On Sunday, we wrapped up our teaching series about Holy Noticing - learning how God is present even in the ordinary moments of our lives. And how we can join God in the work He's doing to draw people to Himself.

So before we get to our video, let's start with this question:

Question: *Who is one person (a teacher, a counselor, a parent, a friend, etc...) who helped you understand something about yourself or something you were doing that changed the way you lived your life for the better?*

Group Covenant

Leader: As we always do, we're going to read our Group Covenant together. These are the ways all of us are agreeing to share our life together as we go on this small group journey. So I'm going to read the first line, and then we'll go around reading it line by line until we're done.

Because we are learning to be God's family:

- **We show up for one another by** prioritizing our weekly meeting.
- **We serve one another by** caring for each other's needs.
- **We worship together by** gathering each Sunday to honor Jesus.
- **We grow together by** taking responsibility for the next step in our faith.
- **We make room for others by** inviting others to join us on the journey.

Alright, so let's start our video teaching for tonight:

Video Teaching (10 Minutes)

Discussion (20 Minutes)

What stood out to you most from the teaching? (What was something you found encouraging, surprising, challenging, or confusing?)

We all want to "help people find life with God", but because we're not sure how to do that, we mostly end up "hoping people find life with God." **What is your biggest struggle when it comes to sharing life with God with other people?**

When someone shares a struggle with you, what is your natural instinct? *Do you try to fix the problem, offer advice, listen and empathize, or look for what God might be doing?* **How might practicing Holy Noticing change the way you respond?**

When someone is struggling, it's easy to assume we know what they need and jump in with advice. *How can we learn to listen for what someone is really experiencing before deciding how to respond?* **As we learned last week, what are some questions that could help us better understand what's going on beneath the surface?**

In the video, we discussed the "Three Nots" (I'm Not Connected, I'm Not Prepared, Life is Not Working). **Is there anyone in your life who would say one of these things? What might be the deeper longing beneath what they're telling you?**

Many of us are comfortable inviting someone to church, but less comfortable connecting their everyday experiences to God. **What makes that second step difficult for you? What are you afraid might happen if you tried to bring God into a conversation naturally?**

The teaching says that we don't have to convince people of anything; we can share what we've experienced and help them consider whether God might be at work in their lives. **How does that approach change the way you think about your responsibility to help others find life with God?**

How can we gently suggest that God might be at work in someone's life without acting as though we know exactly what God is doing? **What is the difference between helping someone investigate Jesus and telling them what they must believe?**

Consider your own story of finding life with God. What part of your experience might help someone who feels disconnected, unprepared, or overwhelmed? **How could you share that part of your story in a way that connects with their experience rather than turning the conversation toward yourself?**

Challenge and Prayer (10 Min)

Leader: Throughout this series, our goal is to be more available to God and to the people He's placed in our lives. God is always at work in the lives of others and our job is to be notice what He's doing, so we can help others notice as well and find life with Him.

Who is one person in your life who might be searching for something deeper without realizing that God could be what they're searching for? *What is one practical step you could take to listen better, share your story, or help them explore life with God?*

Receive Prayer Requests // Close in Prayer

10.18.26 Small Group Video (Helping Others Identify God's Voice)

Over the last few weeks, we've been learning how to live through the practice of Holy Noticing - learning to wake up to God's presence and His activity even in the ordinary moments of our lives. Jesus taught us that God is always at work around us, and that He has invited us to join Him in the work He's doing in the world to make all things new and draw people to Himself.

So we've been learning how to not live our lives on autopilot, but instead live each moment interacting with God. For many of us, this is a brand new way of experiencing life, and it's a big learning curve for all of us. We've spent most of our lives mostly unaware that God is with us that it can almost feel like a fish learning what water is. We have to constantly remind ourselves in each moment - God is here, and He's doing something.

And that's okay. This is a new skill we're learning, but it's so important. Because this is how life was meant to be. A life where God lives within us, and He's at work all around us. And even in the moments of our day that we think are too small or ordinary to matter, He's inviting us to join Him. Which means we're never alone or unsafe. We're always surrounded with all the love and joy and peace, all the power and strength we need to experience life the way Jesus did.

It's a life that Jesus once described as "living water". Where we could drink and never be thirsty again. Where our deepest longings and desires are satisfied. Where even when life gets difficult or feels too much for us to handle, we can rely on God's strength. A life full of meaning and purpose because we are working alongside the God of the Universe in His great mission.

And that life is available to us at all times. Jesus said that His Kingdom was "at hand", meaning it's close enough you can reach out and grab it. But it requires you to notice God in your midst and to call upon Him. And all of us are on a journey to learn how to experience this more and more in our own lives.

But as we talked about on Sunday, we aren't simply wanting this for ourselves. As believers, God has given us the mission to share His life with others. The way we say it each week around our Church is that we are sent out to: share God's Kingdom with those who don't know they're looking for Him. We want to help people find and enjoy life with God.

But though all of us want to help the people in our lives find and enjoy life with God, we're not really sure how to do it. We don't really have a plan to do it. Outside of inviting someone to Church or trying to get someone to talk about what they believe or finding a way to share our beliefs with someone, we don't really know how to help someone find life with God. And so we mostly end up "hoping" people find life with God not really helping them to do it.

So on Sunday, Nathan talked to us about one more skill to learn in our practice of Holy Noticing - helping others identify God's voice in their life. As we've been learning, God is always at work in the lives of every person. He's speaking to them. Calling them to life with Him.

The people around us are often experiencing God without realizing it. He rarely shows up through an audible voice or a big dramatic moment in their life. Instead, His voice of conviction often can feel to a non-believer like restlessness, late-night anxiety, a heavy heart, or the quiet realization that their way of doing life isn't working. We tend to write this off as normal human stress, but the Holy Spirit is actively at work beneath the surface. He stirs a hunger for something deeper and highlights what is broken.

People are searching for God; they just don't know His name yet. But we do. And our job isn't to convince anyone to believe everything we do or to try and convict them of their sin or brokenness. Our job is to point out to them, "I believe God is working in your life, and if you'd lean into Him, I believe it could change everything."

And maybe the idea of trying to help people identify God's voice speaking to them feels a little heavy to you as well. You might think you need special training or education to help people recognize God's voice, but I think it's actually much easier than we tend to think.

Remember what we said on Sunday? If you had a friend who was describing a strange physical symptom they were experiencing, and it sounded identical to something you dealt with last year, what would you say? You wouldn't claim to be a doctor or have some special training, but you'd naturally say, "I don't have all the answers, but that exact thing happened to me. It turned out to be this specific issue, so maybe you should get that checked out."

Spiritual life works the exact same way.

You already know what it feels like when God speaks to you. You recognize that distinct restlessness in your soul, that quiet nudge, or that sudden conviction in your heart. You remember responding to God's call and how it transformed your life. Because you've experienced it personally, you can spot those same patterns in other people. When you hear that familiar restlessness in someone else's story, let it be a trigger for you to say, "I think that might actually be God speaking to you, and I'd love to help you find Him."

And if they're interested, maybe that's the point you invite them to Church. Or you have a longer conversation about who Jesus is and what He's like. And then you're not entering into a conversation where you're trying to sell someone on something they don't want and just "hoping they get it." You're helping someone find what they're looking for.

To make this practical, let's look at the three conversational triggers that we talked about on Sunday - **"The Three Nots"**. These are those things that if someone says them in a conversation should trigger some "Holy Noticing" within you.

The first is: "I'm NOT Connected"

When you hear someone talk how they just moved into town or how hard it is to live far away from family. When someone expresses how hard it is to meet people or how lonely they feel, your spiritual radar should go off. Often disconnection from other people can open a person up

to hearing from God. And certainly this is a good opportunity to invite them to meet people at your Church. And maybe that will help. But maybe we need to take it further.

Because our goal isn't helping them find friends; we want to help them find life with God. So don't skip the spiritual part. Maybe try saying something like: "I'm not sure where you stand on God, but I don't think it's an accident we met. I believe God wants you to have real relationships, and He might be drawing you toward Himself right now. My church is great at helping people find life with God and others—would you come with me?"

The second trigger is: "I'm NOT Prepared"

This happens during major life shifts—both good and bad. Someone gets married, has a baby, or suddenly their quiet child becomes a middle schooler and they are thrown for a loop! Or maybe it's a new career, a sudden job loss, or entering retirement. And they're saying: I was not prepared for this!

Regardless of the circumstance, everyone wants to get this new phase right. And we could certainly step in with lots of great advice we've gotten and be a great resource for them. And sometimes that's what's appropriate. But it might be that this desire they're feeling isn't random. It's God drawing them to do life in a new way, and this season is an opportunity to find God.

So maybe it looks like you telling a struggling young parent, "I'm praying for you because I know you want to be a great mom. And I believe that desire comes directly from God—He wants the best for your family, and if you lean into Him, it will change everything."

The final trigger is: Life is NOT Working

This is the one where someone's heart usually becomes pretty open to God's help. It's when someone opens up about a problem in a relationship or mental health struggles, a financial loss or just overwhelming stress. It's whenever it becomes clear to them: life is not working.

Now, we certainly don't want to make it sound like: "the reason your life isn't working is because you're not doing life God's way!" Because storms come to everyone - whether you're following God or not. But this moment is an opportunity where God is often speaking to people.

We often say that God's address is at the end of your rope. When people run out of other options, they often become much more willing to try listening to God. And God is so good He meets people directly in the middle of their mess.

And so maybe you can gently step in and say, "I don't know all the details, but I believe God is working in your life—even when life isn't working. He promises to be near the brokenhearted, and if you lean into Him, He will meet you there. And I'd love to help you find Him."

Now, maybe those options still fill you with a feeling of dread, but I hope you see that helping people find life with God isn't about trying to force someone to believe something they don't want to believe. It's about helping people to see what's already true in their lives - God loves

them, and He's working in their lives. And He is the One who changes lives. Our job is just to help people notice His voice in their lives. So let's talk now about how we can help people find life by finding God.