



You are pursuing spiritual community.

*“No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good... Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it.” — C. S. Lewis*

For I do not do the **good** I want to do, but the **evil** I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. *Romans 7:19*

How exactly do people help you grow?

1. By their example.

Flee the evil desires of youth and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with **those** who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. *2 Timothy 2:22*

*“The people with whom you associate on a daily basis—your ‘reference group’—are 95% responsible for your success or failure. Choose them carefully.” — David McClelland*

*Proverbs 22:24-25*

2. By holding you accountable.

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.  
*Proverbs 27:17*

Accountability cultivates responsibility.

*“People tend to become what the most important people in their lives think they will become.” — John Maxwell*

3. By giving you knowledge.

My people are **destroyed** for lack of knowledge... *Hosea 4:6*

But **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *2 Peter 3:18*

4. By giving you encouragement.

But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of **Titus**. His **presence** was a joy, but so was the news he brought of the encouragement he received from **you**. *2 Corinthians 7:6-7*

Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to **stay strong** in his faith in God. *1 Samuel 23:16*

*“The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

## | Small Groups

### Group Prep

In preparation for small group, answer the following discussion questions.

### Introduction

What do giving hugs, riding a seesaw, or playing hide-and-go-seek have in common? We can’t do any of them alone! The same is true when it comes to becoming a “good Christian”. If we are going to take our faith seriously, we must prioritize community. Living in isolation allows room for worldly desires, sinful thoughts and struggling with life’s difficulties alone. On the other hand, Christian community provides accountability, wisdom, and much-needed encouragement. If we want to become a “good Christian”, we can’t do it alone.

### Discussion Questions

1. What people, or groups of people, have been the most influential in your life? Describe something you couldn’t have accomplished if you didn’t have the help and support of others? What aspect of life do you know you need help with at this time?

2. When do you feel you’ve grown spiritually in a substantial way? What role did others play in helping you grow? This past week, four specific ways others help us grow spiritually were mentioned.

By their example: Who do you know that you would say is a great example for you to follow? Why? Jim Rohn says “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” Who are the five people in your inner circle? How are they negatively or positively influencing you?

By holding you accountable: What is accountability and what should it look like? Read Proverbs 27:17. What aspects of your spiritual life have you allowed others to speak into? Are there any aspects of your life you feel you need accountability for?

By giving you knowledge: When it comes to spiritual growth, what you don’t know can hurt you. When has your lack of knowledge in an area caused major problems in your life? In what ways can we safeguard our life from things we don’t know?

By giving you encouragement: Read 1 Samuel 23:16-18. How did Jonathan encourage David in his faith? Who in your life encourages you, and who are you seeking out to encourage? Where do you need encouragement?

3. Regarding the four ways spiritual community helps us grow, which do you feel you could most benefit from, and specifically, how would it benefit you? How should your life look different after discussing these biblical practices?

### Action Step

4. What needs to change in your spiritual community in order to become a “good Christian,” and what specific steps do you plan to take this week to make it happen?

My action step is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I will encourage and pray for \_\_\_\_\_ to follow through, and their action step is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

My memory verse is \_\_\_\_\_.

This coming week, I’m praying for \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### Outreach: Groups in Action

Collect new and/or gently used children’s books for the Rosa Park Kindergarten Academy library. Rosa Park’s does not currently have a library at their school. Drop off books at Emmanuel anytime between now and September 23.

Come help stock the Greenwood auditorium with connection cards for the weekend services on a Wednesday evening. Contact Kerry Carmichael at [kcarmichael@eclife.org](mailto:kcarmichael@eclife.org) to schedule a time between 6:00–9:00pm.