



Connect to God

Leader's Guide

Week 1

Topic week 1: Is there more to life than this?

Focus for this 6 week class: Build relationships with participants and help them develop a theology.

Prework Summary: Before class, read the leader's guide and watch the videos online. Notice time for both the teaching video and testimony video and plan the use of you time accordingly to allow good discussion.

Script ****

Speaker: Gus Walls

Worldly things don't satisfy

When we wonder if there isn't more to life than what we're experiencing day to day, we're recognizing expectations that aren't met. Something is missing that can't be found in following a set of rules or performing certain actions, or even professing certain beliefs. We know from experience that the happiness that comes from acquiring possessions, achieving accomplishments, or accumulating wealth is fleeting and does not address our deepest needs. Contemplate and discuss for a few minutes what makes you truly happy. Your conclusions are most likely intangible things like relationships and nature – things created by God for you.

Fulfilling God's purpose brings satisfaction

Revelation 4:11 tells us God created all things by his will, and Paul expands on this truth in Ephesians 2:10 when he says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Before he created anything, before time existed, God planned and designed you as a unique person with a unique combination of gifts, abilities, and strengths. He also planned and designed work that only you can do to further his Kingdom. Your qualities, predisposition, and bias are intentionally suited to accomplish God's plan. When we are in the center of God's will, doing what He's created us to do, we have inexplicable joy, regardless of our current circumstances, and a peace that "transcends all understanding." (Philippians 4:7)

What does it look like to live out your purpose? It looks like an unshakeable confidence in our value and purpose. It looks like peace through the ups and downs of life and the assurance of eternal life. Finally, it looks like no longer searching for the next thing to satisfy but continuing to seek the truth of Christ for the remainder of our lives.

While he promises us a full or abundant life in John 10:10, Jesus does not say we will have an easy life. In fact, he clearly acknowledges that: “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33), but follows up with the promise, “But take heart! I have overcome the world.” He did not take on flesh and die for us to give us a trouble-free life, but rather to make us like himself – overcomers. “Everyone born of God overcomes the world. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:4-5)

God’s purpose is specific to you

Why was I born? What is the point of my life? What is my purpose? We tend to ask these questions when we are working or serving in a role that is not aligned with how God has made us. We often serve out of obligation or guilt, but those reasons cannot overcome a bad fit. When your career uses the abilities and gifts God’s given you, your workplace becomes your mission field, and your peace and joy are lights in the darkness. When you are intentional about knowing how you’re made, and where and how you serve, you receive immense satisfaction and are effective in your life and ministry.

So, how exactly do we place ourselves in the center of God’s will? How do we know how we’re made, and what we’re suited for? Paul tells us, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:4-8)

Knowing how we fit into the body of Christ brings freedom. “Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.” 1 Corinthians 12:1 The freedom to say no to areas that don’t align with your gifts and abilities. The freedom to grow and start new ministries. When you are doing what God created you to do, you are energized and effective.

Mount Pisgah recommends the PLACE assessment (mountpisgah.org/place) to explore your personality type and spiritual gifts, gain insight into your abilities, find your area of passion, and see how your life experiences have shaped you into Kingdom service. Five assessments in this tool provide a complete personal profile to guide you in becoming the hands and feet of Christ in your church, in your community, and in the world.

End Script *****

Page 2 in Participants’ Guide mentions the PLACE assessment :

*****Encourage members to take the PLACE assessment** or review results from their most recent assessment by contacting DiscipleLife@mountpisgah.org to be connected to a PLACE Coach.

Tough Questions / Prep if asked: What about suffering? How do we reconcile that with the abundant life Jesus offers?

The abundant life Jesus promises is also a life that abounds with suffering. In John 10:11, Jesus says that he lays down his life for the sheep. He gives life by giving up his life. He reminded his disciples constantly that their way would be His way: the way of the cross. Paul further explains the idea of abundant life in Christ in II Corinthians 1:5, "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."

Key Scriptures to review:

John 16:33

1 John 5:4-5

Philippians 4:7

Ephesians 2:10

Revelation 4:11

Romans 12:4-8

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

2 Corinthians 1:5

Class Timeline:

	Estimated time
1 Introductions	15 min
2 Testimonial Video	Tom Brady; 1:27 min
3 Discussion Questions	15 min
4 Teaching Video	Gus Walls; 6 min
5 Discussion questions	20 min (page 3 & 4)
6 Takeaways	1 min
7 Prayer	1 min
8 Invitation for next week	1 min

*This week is a little different in that we suggest you play the Testimonial Video first followed by the Teaching Video. Typically, the Teaching Video is first in the class sequencing.

1. Introductions

This is the first week of class, and your mission is to help everyone feel comfortable, get to know them, and help them get to know each other. Begin with each class member providing a

brief introduction of themselves (if they have not already) and tell the class what they hope to get out of the Connect to God Course.

You could also use the icebreaker games suggested on the previous prework page.

2. Play Tom Brady 60 Minutes video (1:27). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoHPx5wTnRs>
It sets up the question and our need to search for purpose.

3. Short Discussion

Ask your class members the following questions or come up with your own. The members may have a few of their own to share too!

- Have you wondered if ‘this’ is all there is to life or if there could be more?
- How could Tom Brady have such success and still be searching for more?
- Why do we think there is something greater out there for me?

4. Teaching Video

Play the Teaching Video : 6:22 minutes

Speaker: Gus Walls – long-time member of the church, choir member

You can read the following paragraph or use your own words to introduce the content:

Human experience confirms that no amount of material, intellectual, or professional success can satisfy our longing for purpose and acceptance. For thousands of years philosophers have debated the meaning of life without reaching a consensus. What is the meaning of life? Life has meaning when we are fulfilling God’s purpose.

5. Discussion questions (page 3 and 4 in booklet):

1. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “He has set eternity in the human heart.” We are eternal creatures, made for eternity. How does this explain man’s continual quest for purpose and meaning?
2. In John 10:9 Jesus says, “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. . . I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” Sometimes circumstances in our lives cause us to doubt we’re experiencing a “full life.” What did Jesus mean?
3. Share a time when you were employed or volunteered in a role that was a terrible fit with your abilities and talents. What did you learn about yourself through that experience?

6. Closing / Take away:

You – your personality, abilities, talents, strengths – were designed by God to fulfill His purposes. Therefore, following our own agenda, regardless of how successful we are, cannot bring fulfillment. Discovering how you’re made and seeking opportunities that align with your unique set of gifts, passions, and abilities are the keys to living a peace-filled life of purpose. Encourage them again to take PLACE if they have not already (info on page 2 of booklet)

7. Prayer:

Instead of including a lesson devoted to how to pray, class leaders will model how to pray each of the six weeks of Connect to God. Before you close in prayer, briefly explain P.R.A.Y. method of prayer (praise, repent, ask and yield) and lead participants through this format. Then pray over them.

PRAISE	Matthew 6:9	“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.’”
REPENT	Matthew 6:12	“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”
ASK	Matthew 6:11&13	“Give us this day our daily bread.” “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]”
YIELD	Matthew 6:10	“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”

Example: Father, we praise that you are powerful and good. You created this world and us all for YOUR purpose. Please forgive us when we look to other places for our significance or when we seek own glory. Please help us to seek and follow your purpose for our lives. We trust you and your ways.

8. Be sure to invite them back for next week!

Fellowship as possible after class.