



*THE LIFE OF A* **JESUS**  
**FOLLOWER**

**#HOPEGROUPSLV**

HOPE CHURCH  
STUDY GUIDE



### What's the vision of #HopeGroupsLV?

#HopeGroupsLV CONNECT people to live the life of a Jesus Follower and create environments for people to belong, be known and be sent to live that life.

**What is the Life of a Jesus Follower Group?** This 7 week Group study is based on a series and devotional rooted and created here at Hope Church. This study will give you the foundation of what it means to be a Jesus Follower.

### What does the Study consist of over the next 7 weeks?

- 42 Day Devotional
- 7 weeks in a Group
- Discussion on the Sermons from Pastor Vance based on the Series 'The Life of a Jesus Follower'

### What about Pastor Vance's 'Unburdened' book?

This book shares the vision of the Life of a Jesus Follower and is a great supplemental resource for your journey. Your group will not be about the book but rather supplemental to their journey. In other words, you don't need to read the book to be in the group and we won't be discussing the Unburdened book.

**Can people join your Group at any time?** Yes, these are all open groups. The only issue will be space available in your home or at your table.

### What are the 3 themes for the devotional?

ABIDE DAYS 1-14

CONNECT DAYS 15-28

SHARE 29-42

### How does this break up into the weeks?

Week 1 Days 1-7

Week 3 Days 15-21

Week 5 Days 29-35

Week 2 Days 8-14

Week 4 Days 22-28

Week 6 Days 36-42

### What are the titles of each week?

Week 1 – IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Week 4 – I BELONG

Week 2 – I'M IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Week 5 – LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Week 3 - I'M SPENDING TIME WITH GOD

Week 6 – IM ON A MISSION

Week 7– THE MISSION IS BIG

### What are the Group Guidelines?

1. Confidentiality: Whatever we share in the group stays in the group.
2. "I" statements: Speak about yourself; don't share someone else's story.
3. Respect: Share your opinions and respect other people's opinions.
4. Time: Show up on time or let someone know if you are running late.
5. Participate: Be willing to participate in the group by sharing your thoughts on the topics.
6. Awareness: Allow other people to speak; don't dominate the time.
7. Avoid Fixing: Don't try to fix someone; allow people their process.
8. Sharing: Be as honest as you feel capable of being about the topic.
9. Gather: Come on the weekend.
10. Fun: Enjoy the people in your group and have fun!

### Why are Connection Groups 4 weeks on Campus and then 3 weeks off campus?

Groups on campus are called Connection Groups and are uniquely designed for new people. We provide childcare and create a 'home turf' experience that helps a new person feel wanted and welcomed. However, staying at the church is not our goal. We know the best environment for great discussion is a living room. This is why after 4 weeks of establishing rapport and safety the final 3 weeks the Group will meet in a home. Your group will determine which home.

**What happens after the 7 weeks?** We hope you have such a great experience that your group agrees to continue to meet until the summer.

**Can I get the Group questions before my group?** YES! We will send you the group questions a few days prior to your Group in our weekly Connection and Community Newsletter. We will also post all the outlines and group questions on website [www.hopechurchonline.com/groupstime](http://www.hopechurchonline.com/groupstime).

**Are we doing an activity as a Group?** We want your Group to share in God's mission locally by participating and praying for God's mission locally and globally.

**PRAY** LOCALLY and GLOBALLY

- Come as a Group for the Prayer Time at Hope (Feb 29, 9-10AM)
- Commit to 'adopting' a missionary and praying for them daily (email Matthew Bentley [matthew@hopechurchonline.com](mailto:matthew@hopechurchonline.com))

**PARTICIPATE** LOCALLY

- Be a Care Community for a Foster Family (Feb 20 Volunteer Orientation 6:30p)
- Have a BBQ and invite your neighbors. (Feb 29)

**What other important dates so I need to know about?**

**February 20** – Foster Care Volunteer Orientation about Care Community (6:30-8pm)

**February 29** – GROUPS GO Day (Plan a Neighborhood BBQ and/or be a Care Community)

**March 9-15** – All Connection Groups Meet Off Campus

**March 21** – Groups Picnic (12-2pm)

**March 23-29** – Last week of the LOAJF Series.

**April 18** – Spiritual Retreat in Mount Charleston (10-2pm)

**What kinds of questions / parts will we review during our 2 hour Group?**

**WELCOME** - This GROUP time is spent sharing any church announcements, group updates, clarifying vision of the group and reminding everyone of the Group guidelines.

**GET TO KNOW YOU QUESTIONS:** These GROUP questions are easy, relational, fun and laid back. The intention is to help people refocus on their time with the group.

**ABIDE GROUP QUESTIONS** - These GROUP questions reflect the message and the devotional. It focuses our heart on what it means for us to abide in Him. Begin with 5-7 minutes reviewing the outline from the weekend and the points that were shared in case people were not there on the weekend.

**CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS** - These GROUP questions reflect on our relationships with one another applying what we just learned

**SHARE GROUP QUESTIONS** - These GROUP questions reflect how we will share what we've learned with those around us.

**PRAYER** - This GROUP time spent taking prayer requests and praying for one another.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** - This GROUP time is spent sharing any reminders and assignments for next week.



## Life of a Jesus Follower Group Discussion Guide

### WEEK 1

**WELCOME** – Share any church announcements, group updates, clarifying vision of the group and reminding everyone of the Group guidelines below.

#### What are the Group Guidelines?

1. Confidentiality: Whatever we share in the group stays in the group.
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3. Respect: Share your opinions and respect other people’s opinions.
4. Time: Show up on time or let someone know if you are running late.
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### GET TO KNOW YOU GROUP QUESTIONS

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- What’s your name, what do you do for a living and tell us a little about your family.
- How long have you been at Hope and how did you find it?
- What are you looking forward to regarding this study?

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### ABIDE GROUP QUESTIONS

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**Review the Outline.** (Connection Groups the Review is done by the Host on Stage.)

- Pastor Vance mentioned 2 questions: (How would you answer the below questions?)
  - How many of you desire to faithfully follow Jesus? What does a faithful follower of Jesus look like?
- If you had the opportunity to do the devotional what day spoke to you and why?

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### CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

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Pastor Vance mentioned in today’s church culture we tend to define a Jesus follower in one of two ways:

- 1) By what a person does—conformity to a system or a pattern of behavior...the focus is on action...we measure faithfulness with this question: *Am I ‘doing’ the right things?* Go to church, read the Bible, pray, give tithes and offerings, witness, go on mission trips, good husband and father, wife and mother, son or daughter, employer/employee...and then there’s the whole list of things you don’t do... *“don’t smoke, drink or chew or run with those who do!”*

AND

- 2) By what a person knows—learning a certain set of principles or beliefs—the focus is on doctrine...we measure faithfulness with the question: *can they answer all the right questions?*

- Which of these have you been guilty of and how?

Pastor Vance shared the problem is that both of these fall SO short of the essence of the life of Christ in the gospels. Paul warns us: *“But I am afraid that...your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”—2 Cor.11:3.* That is the day we are living in...we have so complicated and confused what it is to simply follow Jesus! The

natural tendency of our flesh is to drift away from the simplicity of following Jesus. Our Mission: *We exist to connect people to live the life of a Jesus follower.* For this reason, early in the life of our church plant we took a year and poured over the Gospels to examine the life of Jesus and we discovered something that I had never noticed before: The life of Jesus revolved around three relationships!

- *“The Christian life is nothing less than the life which He lived then...lived now by Him in you.”—Major Ian Thomas*  
*What do you think about that statement?*

*“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”—John 15:5.* You’re identity as a Christian is not in your performance...but in your position IN Christ!

- What makes it hard for you to believe that your identity is NOT in your performance but in your position IN Christ?

Why is “Church” so important? It is the platform established by God to live out my relationship w/Him in fellowship with others. *“So then those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls...Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple and from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”—Acts 2:41, 46-47*

- Why do you think the church is important? And what has the church / groups / community meant to you?

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## SHARE GROUP QUESTIONS

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Jesus came into this world to reveal God and to bring reconciliation between God and man. As Christ came into the world with a mission—He has now sent us as believers into the world with a mission! *“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”—2 Corinthians 5:18-20.* This means that now God’s plan is that through us the world sees Christ and know Him! Mission is NOT what we DO as followers of Jesus; mission is who we ARE as followers of Jesus!

- How can you live out the mission in your own life?

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## PRAYER TIME

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- What do you need prayer for? Make sure to write down people’s prayers.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- CONNECTION GROUPS: Tables 1-4 bring food (Mon and Tue night) or Tables 1-2 bring food (Tues morning) and remember your number of your group and stay committed to the 7 weeks.
- Read your devotional beginning tomorrow (Day 1)
- Create a GroupMe/TEXT with your Group for prayer requests.
- Next week determine what you will do as a Group to share in the mission.
  - PARTICIPATE LOCALLY: Be a Care Community for a Foster Family or have a BBQ and invite your neighbors.
  - PRAY LOCALLY: Come as a Group for the Prayer Time at Hope and /or Commit to ‘adopting’ a missionary and praying for them and connecting with them.
- Take a group picture and post it. Use the hashtag #HopeGroupsLV and caption ‘We are choosing to Live the Life of a Jesus Follower.
- Close in prayer



## Sermon Outline Week 1

The Life of a Jesus Follower

Week 1—It's all about Relationships!

### INTRODUCTION:

Illus.—Matt Emmons, Olympics: Every four years the world turns its attention to a global sporting event called the Olympic Games...in August 2016 the games will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil...celebration of some of the greatest athletes in the world...not ESPN celebrities but hometown heroes...in 2004 the games were held in the historic location of Athens, Greece (birthplace of the games)...Matt Emmons (3-position 50 meter rifle)

*“With one shot to go in Athens, Emmons was on his way to a laugher of a win in the three-position 50-meter rifle event. In fact, all he had to do was hit the target. It'd be like telling Picasso all he had to do was hit the canvas. Emmons fired, then looked at his monitor to see how he'd done. But there was no bullet hole. He told an official he thought there was some weird glitch. Just then the official saw two holes in the target of the shooter next to Emmons and announced that the American would receive a zero for the shot.”—Rick Reilly, Sports Illustrated (9/6/04)*

Lesson from Matt: we better be sure we are aiming at the right target!

In today's church culture we tend to define a Jesus follower in one of two ways:

1- By what a person does—conformity to a system or a pattern of behavior...the focus is on action...we measure faithfulness with this question: *Am I 'doing' the right things?*

What does a Jesus follower look like?

Go to church, read the Bible, pray, give tithes and offerings, witness, go on mission trips, good husband and father, wife and mother, son or daughter, employer/employee...and then there's the whole list of things you don't do... *“don't smoke, drink or chew or run with those who do!”*

2- By what a person knows—learning a certain set of principles or beliefs—the focus is on doctrine...we measure faithfulness with the question: *can they answer all the right questions?*

What does a Jesus follower look like?

Someone who has completed a series of Bible classes and can answer a set of theological questions with pristine accuracy

The problem is that both of these fall SO short of the essence of the life of Christ in the gospels. Paul warns us:

*“But I am afraid that...your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”—2 Cor.11:3*

That is the day we are living in...we have so complicated and confused what it is to simply follow Jesus! The natural tendency of our flesh is to drift away from the simplicity of following Jesus. Our Mission: *We exist to connect people to live the life of a Jesus follower.* For this reason, early in the life of our church plant we took a year and poured over the Gospels to examine the life of Jesus and we discovered something that I had never noticed before:

The life of Jesus revolved around three relationships!

Jesus & His relationship with God the Father

*“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.”—John 14:10-11a*

## Jesus & His relationship with the disciples

- John 1—“Follow Me”
- Luke 9—Feeding 5000 w/His disciples
- Mark 4—Storm on the sea/disciples afraid in the boat

## Jesus & His relationship with the world—those who don’t know God

- John 3—Jesus/Nicodemus
- Mark 5—Jesus/Demon possessed man in the tombs
- John 4—Jesus/Samaritan woman at the well
- Luke 19—Jesus/Zaccheus

Now, understanding that, where does Jesus Christ now live? In me...and the goal of the Christian life is not for me to live for Him, but for me to allow Him to live His life in and thru me...if that’s what His life looked like then, what do you think it’s going to look like now? *“The Christian life is nothing less than the life which He lived then...lived now by Him in you.”—Major Ian Thomas*

### THREE DEFINING STATEMENTS:

#### I. FOLLOWING JESUS IS ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

*“A love relationship with God is more important than any other single factor in your life.”—Henry Blackaby*

Christianity is NOT a religion; it is a relationship! Here so many miss the target...they’ve substituted religion for relationship! All religion says, *“Do your best and hope for the best in the end”*...Christianity says just the opposite, *“There’s nothing you can do...but God did for me what I could not do left to myself!”* Religion is the enemy’s cheap counterfeit for God’s provision in Christ...God doesn’t offer us a system...He offers us a Savior! What we do flows out of what we are! What I do as a Christian is in response to the love relationship and not to get the relationship.

KEY WORD: ABIDE (*in Christ personally and daily*) *“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”—John 15:5*

Your identity as a Christian is not in your performance...but in your position IN Christ!

#### II. FOLLOWING JESUS IS ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER

*Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being...then the Lord God said, “It is not good for man to be alone...”—Genesis 2:7,18*

But after God made man He said, *“It is NOT good”* What was NOT good? Didn’t Adam have a relationship with God in a perfect environment? *“It is not good **for man to be alone...**”*

*“God’s intent in His creating humanity was never to have a relationship with man in isolation. His intent was for our personal relationship with Him to be enjoyed in the context of our interpersonal relationships with others.”*

Some people say, *“My relationship with God is personal!”* And that is true—but it was never designed to be private! Your relationship with God entered you into a much bigger relationship with God’s family! YOU BELONG! If you have a relationship with God and you are not enjoying that relationship in the context of fellowship with others I have two words for you: NOT GOOD!

Why is “Church” so important? It is the platform established by God to live out my relationship w/Him in fellowship with others (*Not simply a religious duty!*)

*“So then those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls...Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple and from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”—Acts 2:41, 46-47*

KEY WORD: CONNECT (*in community large & small groups*)

*“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”—John 15:12.* The 1<sup>st</sup> obvious evidence that I’m walking in fellowship with Jesus is my love for my brothers and sisters in Christ!

### III. FOLLOWING JESUS IS ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD

*“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”—John 17:18*

Jesus came into this world to reveal God and to bring reconciliation between God and man. As Christ came into the world with a mission—He has now sent us as believers into the world with a mission!

*“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”—2 Corinthians 5:18-20*

This means that now God’s plan is that through us the world sees Christ and know Him! (He doesn’t say we “*will be*” ambassadors or ask, “*do you want to be?*”) Mission is NOT what we DO as followers of Jesus; mission is who we ARE as followers of Jesus!

KEY WORD: SHARE (*in the mission locally & globally*)

The Bible describes a grand celebration that is a kickoff to eternity—New Heaven and New Earth where God’s people live in fellowship with God and each other...*“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom...”—Rev. 5:9-10a*

Our lives are to be lived on mission in pursuit of that MOMENT!