

*“Your quality of life isn’t just dependent upon **what** you do, but **who** you do it with.”*

James 3:18 MSG – You can develop a **healthy**, robust **community** that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the **hard work of getting along** with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.

Conversation Starters:

- 1.) Why do you think relationships are such hard work for us sometimes?
- 2.) What kind of people have been most challenging for you relationally and why?
- 3.) What are some of the consequences for thinking you’re better off isolated from people?
(There’s increased weakness and vulnerability to attacks in isolation. There are fewer opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. You can miss out on the diversity that others can add to your life. You live outside of God’s created purpose to live in community. You miss out on the care and provision God intended for you though other people.) **Proverbs 18:1**

Review / Reflect:

Ask your group members to share their favorite points from the sermon, what stood out to them, a phrase or moment from the sermon they related to the most, or question they have. If your members have a hard time remembering, share your notes and favorite points.

Discussion Questions:

Question 1: What kind of work encompasses the “hard work” necessary for us to have meaningful relationships? – *(Setting aside your fears, perceptions, vulnerabilities, and busyness. Exercise patience, restraint, humility, forgiveness, mercy, grace, and selflessness.)*

Three Influence That Try to Pull At Us:

- 1.) The **devil** will lie to you. **John 8:44** - *(The devil is the father of lies.)*
 - The devil can’t harm you unless God gives him a green light, but he can suggest things to you.
- 2.) The **world** will pollute you. *(It gets in our thinking and our feelings. It gets too close. It’s why we fast, to cleanse ourselves)* **Ephesians 4:17-18.**
 - God has called us to be world changers not world chasers.
- 3.) Your **problems** will confuse you. *(Is God far away or is He listening? King David is in a state of confusion.)* **Psalms 10:1, 17**

Question 2: What are some of the effects upon us for not living in community? (*Poor judgment, compromised discernment, and a jacked up life.*) Contrast **Psalms 13:1** with **Psalms 13:6** – *Problems confuse us.* **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

- I need a **group**, and I need a **team**. (*Get connected to receive the best of what God and Discovery have for you.*) **Romans 12:5 NLT** – (*The opposite of isolation is connection. The opposite of belonging is **fitting in**. Choose to belong over fitting in.*)
- Your level of belonging will never exceed your level of self-acceptance. (*Don't let your humanity crowd out your divinity – Chuck Swindoll.*)

Four Parts of Who You Are:

- 1.) **Arena** – I know and **you know**. – I need people who really **know me**. (*The more filtered your life becomes the less authentic you'll be.*) **2nd Corinthians 3:13**, **1 Corinthians 2:11**
- 2.) **Mask** – I know but **you don't know** – I need people who will **protect me**. (*You develop Common Enemy Intimacy around the things you hate because you cannot take off your mask. Take off the mask and let some people in and you'd stop being grumpy, negative, and hateful. Vulnerability is the birthplace of authenticity, love, grace, creativity, joy, and belonging.*) **2nd Corinthians 4:2 MSG** – (*Let someone in to be free from habitual sin. God forgives, but we confess to others so we may be healed. Why? Because others are the ones that will actually walk with you through it.*) **James 5:16**
 - Loving ourselves through the process of **owning our story** is the bravest thing we will ever do. Brene Brown – (*Don't cover it up and pretend it's not there. Walk through it together.*)
- 3.) **Blind spots** – I don't know but **you know**. I need people who will be **honest with me**. (*Letting in the teeth or live with a hanger. You don't know it's there but everybody sees it.*) **Proverbs 27:6 NKJV** – (*A real friend will hurt you for your benefit and point you to Jesus, not deceive through compliments.*)
- 4.) **Potential** – I don't know and **you don't know**. I need people who will **grow me**. (*God knows your potential. It's revealed in groups and on teams. Achieve your potential. Sit one and serve one. Make a difference for the Kingdom of God. – **What** we do matters, but **who** we become matters more.*) **Proverbs 27:17**, **Proverbs 18:24**.