

Groups

What's Next by Chris Hodges

Overview: This group is designed for a 10 week semester. Content should be started week 2. Week 1 should be a meet and greet. The last week should be a celebration.

Session 1: Chapters 1 & 2

Section 1: Know God

- Chapter 1: *Baptism: The Wedding Band of Christianity* – Page 13
- Chapter 2: *Prayer: Conversations with God* – Page 21

Chris Hodges opens the journey of spiritual growth with a foundational truth: the Christian life begins by truly knowing God, not just knowing about Him. Chapter 1 focuses on baptism, explaining that it's not just a religious formality—it's a public declaration of a personal transformation. Like a wedding ring signifies commitment in marriage, baptism signifies our commitment to Jesus. It's a bold and beautiful step of obedience that tells the world we're in.

Hodges emphasizes that baptism isn't what saves us, but it is an important response to what God has already done in our hearts. It reflects an inward change and communicates that we're leaving our old life behind. Many believers delay this step, thinking they need to be "better" first, but Chris reminds us that baptism is the beginning of the journey—not the finish line.

Chapter 2 dives into the essential practice of prayer. Hodges presents prayer as an ongoing, conversational relationship with God. It's not about using fancy words or following a strict formula; it's about being real, honest, and consistent. God desires relationship over ritual, and prayer is the lifeline that keeps us connected to Him.

The author introduces practical tips for deepening your prayer life, including setting aside daily time, finding a quiet space, and using models like the Lord's Prayer as a guide. He also reassures readers that God listens even when we feel like we're

fumbling for words. The key is consistency and sincerity—just showing up and opening your heart.

Together, these chapters build a powerful case for starting the Christian life off right: with public commitment and daily communion. Baptism marks your decision to follow Jesus, and prayer sustains that relationship every day after. These are not just disciplines—they are acts of devotion that lead to deeper intimacy with God.

Discussion Questions (8):

1. What did baptism mean to you when you first heard about it?
2. Have you been baptized? If not, what's holding you back?
3. Why do you think baptism is such a powerful spiritual marker?
4. How does viewing baptism as a "wedding band" change your understanding of it?
5. How would you describe your current prayer life?
6. What helps or hinders you from praying consistently?
7. What does it look like to make prayer more relational than ritualistic?
8. How can you take one step this week to deepen your commitment to prayer?

Session 2: Chapter 3

Chapter 3: The Bible – Letting God's Word Speak to You – Page 41

In Chapter 3, Chris Hodges emphasizes that the Bible is God's primary way of speaking to us today. While many believers hope for signs, audible voices, or dramatic encounters, God has already spoken—clearly and consistently—through His Word. Hodges reminds us that Scripture is alive, powerful, and fully relevant for every situation we face. The challenge is not that God is silent; it's that we often aren't listening or engaging with His Word regularly.

Hodges encourages readers to develop a daily habit of reading the Bible, even if it starts with just a few verses. He offers practical strategies such as choosing an understandable translation, using reading plans, and journaling what stands out. He reassures us that the goal is not perfection or performance—it's connection. When we approach the Bible with an open heart, God meets us there.

Ultimately, reading the Bible is about more than gaining knowledge—it's about knowing God. The more familiar we become with His Word, the more clearly we can discern His voice, character, and will. Scripture strengthens our spirit, corrects our path, and reminds us of who we are in Christ. It's not just a discipline—it's a daily opportunity for transformation.

Discussion Questions (6):

1. What's your current rhythm (if any) for reading the Bible?
2. What obstacles have kept you from engaging Scripture more consistently?
3. How does knowing the Bible is "God's voice in print" shape your motivation to read it?
4. What tools (like reading plans or apps) have helped you stay in the Word?
5. How do you personally hear from God through Scripture?
6. What's one practical change you can make this week to prioritize reading the Bible?

Session 3: Chapters 4 & 5

Section 2: Find Freedom

- Chapter 4: *Relationships: Show Me Your Friends* – Page 69
- Chapter 5: *Transparency: Honesty Is the Best Policy* – Page 85

In these chapters, Chris Hodges highlights that freedom is often found through relationships. God designed us to live in community, not isolation. Chapter 4 begins with the powerful idea that your closest relationships will shape your future. If you want to grow in Christ, you need to walk with people who are heading in the same direction. The people we surround ourselves with influence our thoughts, habits, and ultimately our destiny.

Hodges encourages believers to evaluate their friendships. Are they building you up or pulling you down? One of the key steps to finding freedom is aligning yourself with godly, encouraging people who will challenge you and hold you accountable. Small groups and church community are vital because they provide both support and sharpening. Transformation happens best in the context of trusted relationships.

Chapter 5 dives deeper into the importance of transparency. It's not enough to just have people around you—you have to be real with them. Hodges shares how being honest about your struggles opens the door for healing and freedom. Many Christians remain stuck because they're afraid of being seen. But God uses vulnerability to break the chains of shame and secrecy.

The author provides practical advice for finding safe spaces to open up—not with everyone, but with trusted, mature believers who can point you back to Jesus. When you stop pretending and start confessing, God begins restoring. True freedom requires courage, but the result is a lighter, freer heart and a stronger walk with God.

These chapters together emphasize that freedom is a community project. You need the right people, and you need to be honest with them. God wants to use others in your journey toward emotional and spiritual health—but you have to let them in.

Discussion Questions (8):

1. Who are the 2-3 people who influence you most?
2. How have your friendships shaped your walk with God in this season?
3. Are you currently in any relationships that may be keeping you from spiritual growth?
4. What would it look like to prioritize community and godly friendships more intentionally?
5. Why do you think vulnerability is so difficult for many believers?
6. Have you experienced healing through confession or transparency?
7. What kind of environment helps you feel safe to be honest?
8. What's one step you can take this week to pursue deeper relationships and greater honesty?

Session 4: Chapter 6

Chapter 6: The Holy Spirit: A Breath of Fresh Air – Page 101

Chris Hodges introduces the Holy Spirit not as a mystical figure but as a close and personal friend who is essential to our walk with God. Many people misunderstand the Holy Spirit, but Hodges explains that He is God—present with us today. The Spirit is not weird or spooky; He is a helper, counselor, and guide.

The chapter breaks down how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. He empowers us, comforts us, gives us wisdom, and produces spiritual fruit. Hodges emphasizes that the Holy Spirit enables us to live victoriously and with joy, something we can't do in our own strength. Receiving and walking with the Spirit is a daily process that transforms us from the inside out.

Hodges also discusses the importance of inviting the Holy Spirit in through prayer and surrender. We don't have to earn His presence—He's already been given to every believer. But to experience His fullness, we must live with openness, expectation, and obedience.

Discussion Questions (6):

1. What has been your past understanding of the Holy Spirit?
2. How does Hodges' teaching shift your perspective?
3. In what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit work in your life?
4. What would it look like to invite the Holy Spirit into your daily routine?
5. What gifts or fruit of the Spirit do you want to grow in?
6. How can you create space to hear from and follow the Spirit this week?

Session 5: Chapters 7 & 8

Section 3: Discover Purpose

- Chapter 7: *Spiritual Gifts: You Were Made for This* – Page 125
- Chapter 8: *The Body of Christ: You Can't Be You Without Me* – Page 139

These chapters focus on discovering and walking in your God-given purpose. Hodges starts by addressing how each believer is uniquely gifted by God for a reason. Chapter 7 unpacks the concept of spiritual gifts, explaining that they are not just for pastors or "super Christians" but for everyone in the Church. Your gifts are clues to your purpose.

Chris encourages readers to explore their passions, talents, and burdens to discern what God may be calling them to do. He introduces tools like spiritual gifts assessments and highlights how purpose and fulfillment often intersect. When you're serving in your sweet spot, life feels full of meaning.

Chapter 8 explores the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ. Every believer is a part of the body and has a role to play. There are no extras in the kingdom of God.

Hodges teaches that community and contribution go hand in hand: you can't fully know your purpose in isolation.

The Church is not a building; it's a living, breathing movement made up of individual parts working together. When you know your gift and connect with the body, you multiply your impact. God designed us for purpose, and that purpose is activated in community.

These chapters call believers to stop sitting on the sidelines and start serving with passion and intention. You were made for more, and the Church needs what you bring to the table.

Discussion Questions (8):

1. What spiritual gifts have you discovered in yourself so far?
2. How do you think your passions or personality might point to your purpose?
3. What are you naturally drawn to when you think about serving others?
4. How does knowing you're part of the body of Christ impact your sense of belonging?
5. What fears or hesitations have kept you from stepping into your purpose?
6. Who in your life has helped you see your gifts more clearly?
7. How could serving in your church or community change your spiritual growth?
8. What is one way you can activate your purpose this week?

Session 6: Chapter 9

Chapter 9: Growth: The Most Exciting Part of Christianity – Page 149

Growth isn't just a goal in the Christian life—it's the adventure. In this chapter, Hodges talks about how spiritual growth is both a gift and a responsibility. We don't grow by accident. We grow by design. He encourages believers to take ownership of their journey with intentional spiritual habits.

Hodges outlines simple practices that create momentum: daily prayer, Bible reading, confession, and fellowship. He stresses that spiritual growth isn't about perfection, but about progress. God wants to meet you right where you are and walk with you forward.

This chapter is all about consistency. The most exciting part of Christianity isn't the mountaintop moments—it's the steady transformation that happens when we pursue Jesus day by day.

Discussion Questions (6):

1. What are some areas where you've seen growth in your spiritual life?
2. What habits help you stay connected to God during the week?
3. Where do you feel stuck or stagnant in your growth?
4. How does Hodges' view of growth encourage or challenge you?
5. What role does community play in your spiritual development?
6. What's one new rhythm you want to implement to grow in your faith?

Session 7: Chapters 10 & 11

Section 4: Make a Difference

- Chapter 10: *Servant Heart: The Greatest of All Time* – Page 175
- Chapter 11: *Eternal Reward: Treasures in Heaven* – Page 191

Chapters 10 and 11 invite readers to step into the impact zone of their faith. Christianity isn't just about personal growth—it's about making a difference. Chapter 10 centers on the servant-hearted life. Jesus modeled greatness through humility and service, and we are called to follow His lead.

Hodges dismantles the lie that serving is for the few or the extra-spiritual. He shows that true greatness is found not in position or platform, but in selfless love. Every act of service, big or small, matters deeply in the kingdom of God. He shares stories and Scripture that highlight how joy and fulfillment are unlocked when we live beyond ourselves.

In Chapter 11, the focus shifts to eternal perspective. Hodges reminds us that our time on earth is short, and how we live now has lasting impact. He discusses the idea of eternal rewards—not as a gimmick or prosperity pitch, but as a biblical promise. God delights in rewarding His children for faithful service.

This chapter urges us to stop living for temporary applause and start investing in eternal outcomes. What we do for others, when done in love and obedience, echoes into eternity. Every prayer, every gift, every sacrifice counts.

Together, these chapters ask a big question: Are you using your life to build your kingdom or God's? When you serve and live for eternity, your life begins to overflow with purpose and significance.

Discussion Questions (8):

1. What does "servant-heartedness" look like in your life?
2. Who in your life models the kind of humility and service that inspires you?
3. What are some small but meaningful ways to serve others daily?
4. How do you think God measures greatness?
5. What thoughts or fears come up when you think about living for eternity?
6. How does the idea of eternal rewards affect your perspective?
7. Where do you feel God nudging you to make a difference right now?
8. What is one area you can begin serving with more intention this week?

Week 8: Chapter 12

Chapter 12: Impact: Change Your World – Page 207

In the final chapter, Hodges brings everything full circle. The Christian life is meant to overflow into others. We were never meant to just receive—we are called to give, influence, and shine. God placed you where you are, in this generation and in your community, for a reason.

Making an impact doesn't mean doing something grand—it means doing something intentional. Whether it's mentoring someone, serving in church, showing kindness, or sharing your story, your life can make a difference right where you are. Hodges encourages every believer to think like a world-changer, even if your "world" is just your block, your workplace, or your family.

The message is clear: you are called, equipped, and sent. God wants to partner with you to bring hope and light. The world doesn't need more perfect people. It needs willing ones.

Discussion Questions (6):

1. What does "changing your world" look like in your daily context?
2. How has your understanding of impact shifted throughout this study?
3. What is one sphere of influence God has clearly given you?

4. How can you begin serving with more intentionality and purpose?
5. What would you say is your next step in making a difference?
6. How can this group support and encourage you in that next step?