

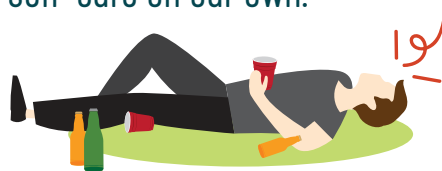
SELF-ASSESSMENT

Over the last few weeks, we've gathered to discuss and learn together from Jesus. These studies point to the greater story of God's care for us. As someone reads it aloud, let's reflect on that story together.



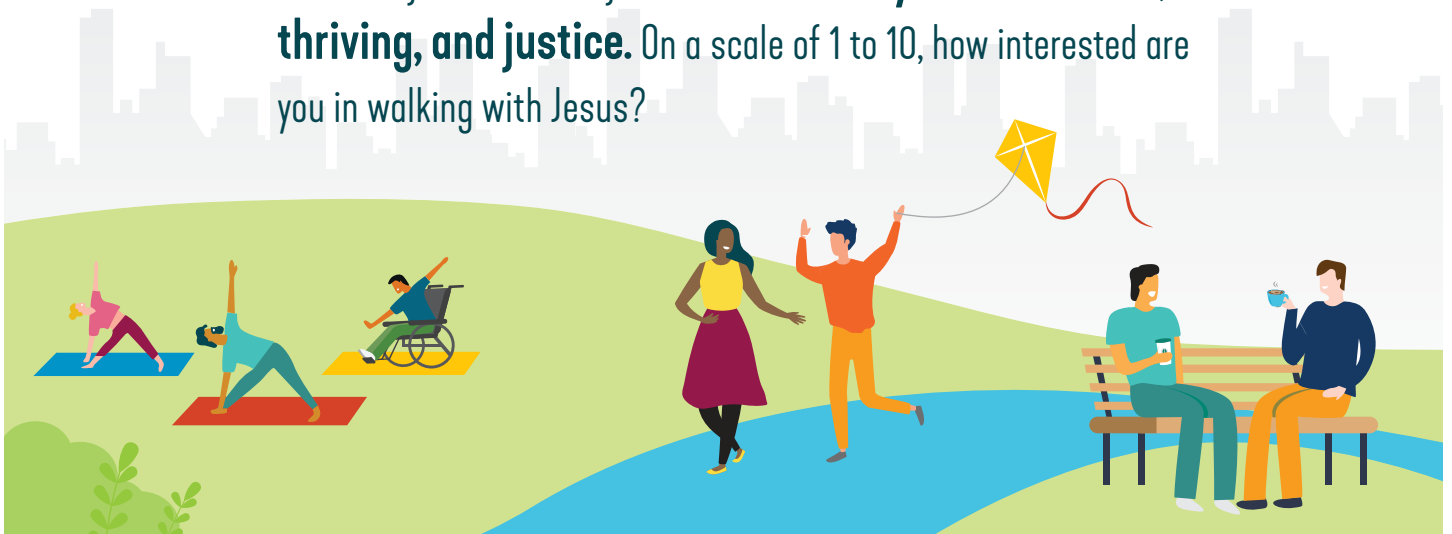
God gave us the **beautiful gifts** of bodies, souls, and relationships.

But we decided we could do great self-care on our own. We could not, and we **damaged** the gifts God gave us.



God did not give up on us. Jesus came to restore our bodies, souls, and relationships through dying and coming back to life. Jesus offers us **peace and life to the fullest**.

When we join Jesus, we join his **community of connection, thriving, and justice**. On a scale of 1 to 10, how interested are you in walking with Jesus?



On your own, tell Jesus how you feel about this story. Close your eyes, and spend some time in silence. Pay attention to any thoughts, images, sounds, or sensations. Then share as a group.



A HEALING TOUCH

Self-care Study 1

BACKGROUND

In ancient times, society shunned people with skin diseases, automatically considering them contagious and “unclean.”

- How do your friends and family show they care about you?
- What is one way a friend showed you that they care during this past week?

MARK 1:40–42: A HEALING TOUCH

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

REFLECTION

- Describe the man’s physical, relational, and spiritual needs.
- What do you like about Jesus’ reaction to the man?
- Picture yourself as the man with leprosy. How would you feel as Jesus spoke to you and touched you?
- Describe how you think this interaction changed this man’s life.

LIFE APPLICATION

- How would you feel about touching someone else who had leprosy?
- If you could have God heal one part of your body, what would it be? Why? Just as the man asked Jesus for healing, would you like to ask Jesus for something today?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Sit in a comfortable position, and breathe slowly. Scan your body from the top of your head to your toes. Where do you feel any tightness or pain? As you name that place, say, “Welcome, Jesus, welcome,” and let any tension go. Breathe deeply. Release. Then think of any issues in your life that you would like to share with Jesus. Name the issues and say, “Welcome, Jesus, welcome.”

* Taken from ‘Spiritual Disciplines Handbook’ by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun



SHE BECOMES A DAUGHTER

Self-care Study 2

BACKGROUND

In ancient Jewish Culture, a woman's period was stigmatized. Because this woman had bled non-stop for twelve years she would not have been able to have a normal life and would have been ostracised and shamed in her community.

- How about today? Who do we avoid in society?

MARK 5:25–34: A HEALING TOUCH

A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?" His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

REFLECTION

- Describe her physical, relational, and spiritual needs. What do you think her life was like?
- Picture yourself as this woman. How would you feel interacting with the crowd and Jesus?
- Imagine what it meant for this woman and the crowd to hear Jesus say, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

LIFE APPLICATION

Jesus is full of love for people like this woman, and he invites imperfect people like us to join him in loving those who are suffering.

- Think about an issue in your life that you would feel vulnerable or ashamed sharing about. If you brought this to Jesus, how do you think he would respond? Let's practice doing that now.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Each of us is beautiful in the eyes of God, but sometimes we are critical of ourselves. Our souls carry these burdens. Pick one of these emotions that you have experienced most this week. We are going to invite God into our souls and feelings.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| • Anger | • Sadness |
| • Loneliness | • Anxiety |
| • Numbness | • Other |

Pray this prayer: *Jesus, I have been feeling (emotion). Would you please speak to me about this right now. (pause) Fill me with your love.*

Share with the group which one you picked and how you felt during prayer.



‘JUST GO AWAY!’

Self-care Study 3

BACKGROUND

Jesus and his twelve students had been working very hard to care for everyone else’s needs, but they had been neglecting their own needs. They were tired and hadn’t had a chance to eat! They just wanted the crowd to go away.

- Describe how you feel when you take care of others needs and neglect your own.

MARK 6:31–43: TIRED AND HUNGRY

Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his [disciples] didn’t even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat.” But Jesus said, “You feed them.” “With what?” they asked. “We’d have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!” “How much bread do you have?” he asked. “Go and find out.” They came back and reported, “We have five loaves of bread and two fish.” Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish.

REFLECTION

- Describe the difference between how Jesus feels about the crowd, and how the disciples feel about them.
- Describe the life-lessons that Jesus wants to teach the disciples (and us) from this story.

LIFE APPLICATION

Jesus has compassion on us. We can tap into his love and offer compassion to others, even when we are physically tired, maxed-out relationally, or spiritually empty.

- We want to grow in experiencing Jesus’ compassion for us personally, and for showing his compassion to others. Which one is harder for you today?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Jesus’ compassion can repair broken relationships. In prayer, let’s each bring a relationship to Jesus where we feel disappointment. This may include getting ghosted, feeling shamed, or just miscommunication.

Pray this prayer: *Jesus, show me which relationship needs your healing and compassion. Fill me with your compassion for me, and give me with new love for (person) Show me one concrete way I can mend this relationship this week.*



STUCK IN A RUT

Self-care Study 4

BACKGROUND

Living with a disability was much more difficult in the ancient world than it is today. Many with disabilities would go to this pool, hoping that it had healing powers.

- What does hope mean to you?

JOHN 5:2–9: RUNNING OUT OF HOPE

Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?” “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.” Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

REFLECTION

- What physical, relational, and spiritual needs do you see in this man who cannot walk? Describe his life.
- His first response to Jesus shows us a lot about his view of his situation. Describe his perspective.
- Describe how Jesus cares for this man. What do you admire about Jesus?

LIFE APPLICATION

- Describe someone you know who is hopeful. Describe someone you know who struggles with hope.
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how hopeful are you? Why?
- If Jesus invited you to place your ultimate hope and faith in him, how would you respond? Why?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

In a minute, we are going to think about how to find hope in Jesus. Let’s do the self-assessment below.