

## Connect Group Conversation (Leader Guide)

Week of March 3rd, 2024

### MAIN IDEA

Fresh from his transformative journey in Africa, he brought back not just stories but a renewed vision for disciple-making that touches hearts across continents. Pastor Steve emphasized the importance of one-to-one relationships in spiritual growth, drawing from biblical examples like Paul and Timothy, and Jesus and John. He shared powerful testimonies of leaders worldwide who are making a significant impact through disciple-making. Pastor Steve encouraged us to press on towards our spiritual goals, emphasizing that while we all have pasts that shape us, they shouldn't hold us back from the future God has planned for us. He reminded us that our efforts in spiritual growth and disciple-making should not only be internal but also external, by choosing the right companions and focusing on our ultimate coach, Jesus Christ.

**Leader Tip:** Remember, the goal of our discussion is not just to share knowledge but to foster genuine relationships and growth. Encourage everyone to share openly, without fear of judgment. A concept from Pastor Steve's message that can be a great tip for leaders is the idea of "running with fast runners." Encourage group members to seek out and cultivate relationships with those who inspire them to grow in their faith, just as Paul encouraged the Philippians to follow his example and those living according to God's pattern.

### TALK IT OUT

- Pastor Steve talked about the importance of one-to-one disciple-making. Reflect on a time someone invested in you personally. How did that relationship help you grow spiritually? (Reference: 2 Timothy 2:2)
- Considering our pasts can sometimes hold us back, share a moment when you felt stuck because of your past. How did you overcome it, or how are you seeking to overcome it, with God's help? (Philippians 3:13-14)
- Pastor Steve highlighted the difference between internal and external efforts in our spiritual journey. What are some internal changes you're making to grow spiritually? Are there external influences or relationships you need to adjust? (Hebrews 12:1)
- How can we, as a group, support one another in 'pressing on' towards our spiritual goals? What practical steps can we take to encourage each other this week? (Galatians 6:2)

## Students/Young Adults

1. Pastor Steve shared about his trip and how people are making a big difference in others' lives. What's one way you can make a positive impact in someone's life this week, even in a small way?
2. Have you ever felt held back by something you did or something that happened to you? How can knowing God helps us move past our mistakes and grow? (Philippians 3:13-14)
3. Discuss the idea of having spiritual mentors like Paul had Timothy. Is there someone in your life who helps you grow in your faith? What makes that relationship important?
4. Pastor Steve talked about pressing on toward goals. What's a goal you have for your spiritual life, and what's one step you can take this week to work towards it?

## Parents of School-Aged Children

1. How can we as parents model the importance of spiritual growth and disciple-making to our children?
2. Discuss the challenges and opportunities of guiding our children through their past mistakes or challenges. How can we help them see their past through God's eyes?
3. Pastor Steve mentioned the importance of the company we keep. How can we help our children choose friends that encourage their spiritual growth?
4. What are some practical ways we can encourage our children to 'press on' and strive for their spiritual goals, regardless of their age?

## Optional Deeper Discussion Topics

- **Disciple-making:** Explore how we can implement one-to-one disciple-making in our community. Who are potential Pauls and Timothys in our lives?
- **Past vs. Future:** Discuss the impact of our past on our present and future. Share biblical examples of individuals who overcame their pasts through God's grace (e.g., Moses, Paul).
- **Spiritual Growth:** Reflect on practical steps we can take to grow spiritually, focusing on both internal and external aspects. How does community play a role in our spiritual growth?
- **Living with Purpose:** Consider the purpose Christ has taken hold of us for. How can we live out this purpose in our daily lives, careers, and relationships?