



A 4-week small group that teaches you how to LIVE life as a Jesus Follower, establishing a relationship with Jesus and learn daily habits that will keep you in Christ and help you grow. Each week will cover a different topic and its very important that you attend each week.



If you are a mature and seasoned believer you can start here! Discover Awaken is a two-week small group to help you learn more about the mission and vision of Awaken Las Vegas to find your place to serve and grow in this community.

awakenlv.org/signup

THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE

WHY CHURCH?

Ephesians 4:7-16

WEEK 14

The ascension of Jesus signified The initiation of the Great Commission

Everyone has dreams. I don't mean the dreams that occur in REM sleep or while you fall into an afternoon nap. I mean life dreams. Life dreams are often a mixture of hope, fantasy, conviction, and doubt. We put in hard work and bank on circumstances, working out our way to bring them to pass. Honestly, the outcomes are highly varied.

On the other hand, God's dreams are much different. God dreams into reality. In other words, His dreams take shape in this physical world we live in. God's dreams aren't fly-by-night fancies that never materialize; they are the concrete realities of life. Did you know God has a dream right now that He is fulfilling in real-time? His dream is the redemption of the nations to Himself through the single and all-sufficient sacrifice of His Only Son, Jesus.

You might think, "That is an amazing dream God has; how does He bring that to pass?" Well, according to Ephesians 4:7-16, God has a how, a who, and a where to this dream. His how is gifted people He has placed in the church. His who is every Christian who is being equipped. And His where is the local church in which they are planted. So when people say to me, "Why church?" I read Ephesians 4:7-16 and say, "This is why." The church is God's people whom He is equipping to fulfill His dream of redeeming the nations by carrying forward the gospel of Jesus. And one day soon, we will see that dream fully realized in heaven itself.

(10 min) OPENING PRAYER

Pray that God will permeate your time with His presence. Ask God to give you a passion and burden for His dream, the redemption of the nations.

(25 min) TIME TO CONSIDER

As you've had the opportunity to reflect on what God has spoken to you through this week's lesson, consider these questions as a group and discuss them.

1. What is God's purpose for Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and Teachers? In what way are those gifted people essential to God's church today?
2. God's dream is realized in the laboratory of the local church. The word used in these verses to describe what God does through and to His people is equip. It means to build up. According to these verses, God is building up His saints for the work of the ministry. Explain how that works. How are you intentionally seeking to be equipped or to grow spiritually? How are you ministering to other Christians so they can be equipped for God's work?

We don't just go to church. We are the church.

3. Real growth happens when you are firmly rooted in the soil of the local church. Paul described that in Ephesians 4:1-6. You are planted so that you can grow. How do you need to plant yourself more permanently in the local church? What steps can you take? What sacrifices need to be made?

Every Christ follower learns to reach their full spiritual potential in the local church.

WEEKLY MEMORIZATION VERSES: ***Ephesians 4:11-12 "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."***

EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT TOGETHER: Spend time as a life group praying and discussing the key things that emerge from your discussion of this week's questions. Discuss how your Life Group can contribute to the overall work that belongs to all of us, which is mutually equipping and fulfilling God's mission.

(5 min) LIVE IT

Be intentional about centering each day this week around the presence of Christ in your life. Begin each day in prayer and dedicate daily time to reading Scripture. Take steps this week to be more intentional about your spiritual equipping. Prayerfully plan how to harness what is offered in the local church to be built up for the work God has called you to.