



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 1

December 31<sup>st</sup> & January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

### Ice Breaker:

Share a new resolution you made in 2012 or something you began in 2011 that you want to build on this year.

### Opening Prayer:

Father God, thank you for sending Jesus so that we could touch, see, hear and feel your great love for us.

### For Discussion:

#### Read Colossians 1:15-22

This passage clearly establishes that Jesus is God in the flesh. He is not a partial representation of God, but the very image of God. Look back and find how many times these verses show that Jesus has first place in God's world by using the phrases in "all things" and in "everything."

God has placed Jesus in authority over our world, but he has given us a choice as to whether we will allow him to have first place in our hearts. Pastor Ryan reminded us that when we are not allowing Jesus to have first place in our lives—when we have severed our connection with him—we struggle. But if we are struggling and disconnected from God, there is a way back.

#### Read Acts 3:19-23

What two actions steps are described in verse 19 that are part of reconnecting with God?

The Greek word for repent is *metanoeo* means "to perceive afterwards." It implies reflection on past behaviors and a change of mind or purpose. This can occur when we first make a decision to turn toward Christ and it can also occur whenever we recognize our mistakes and choose to turn away from them and toward God.

- During an average week, how much time do you carve out for personal reflection?
- Do you think that making more time for reflection would result in better choices and decisions?
- What is one activity that is stealing your time that you could cut out in order add this in?

The Bible teaches that walking with Jesus is not a one-time confession; it is a life-long journey.

#### Read John 14:15-21

This passage tells us that our love for Jesus is shown by our obedience to his commands. It also promises that we do not have to fulfill those commands in our own strength, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, who "...lives with you and will be in you." We welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit into our lives through our obedience.

Let's close by taking some time for personal reflection.

- Is there something from the past year that is continuing to cause you stress, worry and anxiety?
- Are there any negative thoughts or behaviors that you need to remove from your life this year?

If you are comfortable, share your reflections with your group.

Ryan encouraged us to admit our faults, to turn toward God, to trust in his love and his forgiveness. If you are ready to do that, join others in praying the closing prayer out loud together:

### Closing Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to take on human flesh so that you could offer the ultimate sacrifice for my sins—your own life. I admit that I've made some big mistakes. I turn toward you and ask for your forgiveness.





I trust in your promise to forgive me and cleanse me and empower me to follow you into a brand new life in this brand new year.