



# REVOLUTION

## Changing what we orbit

### INTRODUCTION

Just like planets revolve around the sun, our lives revolve around certain priorities, commitments, and desires. The question is not whether or not we revolve around something, but what are we revolving around? Is it Jesus and his way, or something else? This study will explore changing what we revolve around so that our lives are pulled into the orbit of Jesus and his Kingdom.

Faith, not Fear

Truth, not Lies

Communion, not Consumption

Grace, not Guilt

Service, not Status

Belovedness, not Business/Busyness



# REVOLUTION

“Faith, not Fear”

## Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you created us for yourself and your greatest desire is that we would center our lives on your love for us. Forgive us for all the ways our lives revolve around lesser things. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and realign our orbit once again so that we gravitate toward your love for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Opening Question:** What is one of your silliest fears or phobias?

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-14

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.” When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born... Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

## Discussion

1. Knowing that Herod later tries to kill the child Jesus, how would you contrast the reaction of Herod to Jesus’ birth with the reaction of the Magi?
2. What happens when Herod operates from a place of fear?
3. What happens when the Magi operate from a place of trust?
4. What are the effects in our lives when we revolve around fear?
5. What are the effects in our lives when we revolve around faith?
6. Faith most often means “trust” in the Bible. What does trust look like for the Magi? What does greater trust in God look like for us?
7. What would have to be true in your life to move from fear into greater trust?

## Big Idea

The more we trust God and learn to trust God, the more we revolve around faith, not fear. Like the Magi, we must learn to approach the new things God is doing with curiosity, wonder and then be ready to trust and obey God when the time comes. We must be able to say, “I trust you with a greater intensity than I fear things. I want my faith in you to have more pull on my life than what I’m afraid of.”



# REVOLUTION

“Truth, not Lies”

## Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you created us for yourself and your greatest desire is that we would center our lives on your love for us. Forgive us for all the ways our lives revolve around lesser things. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and realign our orbit once again so that we gravitate toward your love for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Opening Question:** When was a time where you were completely fooled in a fun/silly way ?

**Scripture:** Romans 8:12-16

So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn't an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons and daughters. You didn't receive a spirit of slavery to lead you back again into fear, but you received a Spirit that shows you are adopted as his children. With this Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father." The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children.

## Discussion

1. What are some of the lies of our modern age that we're most led to believe?
2. How might those both enslave us and lead us into fear?
3. This passage talks instead about being "led by the Spirit." What does that mean to you?
4. What truth does the Spirit want to communicate to us and for us to believe?
5. How does knowing and trusting that we are God's children help us live more like Jesus and experience more freedom and joy in life?
6. How might embracing this truth from the Holy Spirit help us recognize and resist the lies?
7. What are some ways you might tap into a greater sense of the truth of your "child of God-ness?"

## Big Idea

So much of what our life looks like comes down to which voices and stories we hear and heed. We live in a world saturated with voices and stories that do not always tell the truth about us or the world that God dreams about. The good news of the gospel is true. When we can truly trust the loving whisper of the Holy Spirit reminding us that we are God's children, we have assurance of which story we belong to—which truth is the biggest truth. The more we trust that guiding power of the Spirit, the more we are led into the abundant way of Jesus Christ and are liberated by the joyful obligation to live for him.



# REVOLUTION

“Communion, not Consumption”

## Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you created us for yourself and your greatest desire is that we would center our lives on your love for us. Forgive us for all the ways our lives revolve around lesser things. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and realign our orbit once again so that we gravitate toward your love for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Opening Question:** What is your secret, guilty buying pleasure?

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 11:17-25

Now I don't praise you as I give the following instruction because when you meet together, it does more harm than good. First of all, when you meet together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it. It's necessary that there are groups among you, to make it clear who is genuine. So when you get together in one place, it isn't to eat the Lord's meal. Each of you goes ahead and eats a private meal. One person goes hungry while another is drunk. Don't you have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you look down on God's churches and humiliate those who have nothing? What can I say to you? Will I praise you? No, I don't praise you in this. I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me." He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me."

## Discussion

1. What do you see Paul (the church leader writing this) being so concerned about here?
2. Where do we see this kind of thing happening in our current world?
3. What are some of the symptoms of a culture of consumption and "affluenza"?
4. What are some of the things that happen when we share in Holy Communion? What do we hear, see, do, affirm?
5. How might what happens at the communion table point to another way of being in the world?
6. What would have to be true for the communion table to extend to other "tables" in our lives and world?

## Big Idea

Our society is big on consumption. Buying, acquiring more and more. Jesus is big on communion. Holy Communion and what happens at the table when we share the bread and cup points not only to Jesus' death but also to a way of life that Jesus modeled where everyone has enough, where there is mutual giving and receiving. Our lives and world start to look more like the Kingdom of God the more and more the values of the communion table carry over to other tables!



# REVOLUTION

“Grace, not Guilt”

## Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you created us for yourself and your greatest desire is that we would center our lives on your love for us. Forgive us for all the ways our lives revolve around lesser things. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and realign our orbit once again so that we gravitate toward your love for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Opening Question:** What is an early memory of feeling bad about something you did?

**Scripture:** John 8:2-11

Early in the morning he returned to the temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and taught them. The legal experts and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. Placing her in the center of the group, they said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone women like this. What do you say?” They said this to test him, because they wanted a reason to bring an accusation against him. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger. They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, “Whoever hasn’t sinned should throw the first stone.” Bending down again, he wrote on the ground. Those who heard him went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. Finally, only Jesus and the woman were left in the middle of the crowd. Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Is there no one to condemn you?” She said, “No one, sir.” Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, don’t sin anymore.”

## Discussion

1. Why do you think that these legal experts place this woman in the center of the group?
2. How do you imagine this woman feels? What is she thinking?
3. Revolving around guilt leads to shame. What are the effects of shame on our lives?
4. Which action or word from Jesus sticks out the most for you from the passage? Why?
5. Where do we see grace at work in this passage? What is grace?
6. How does God’s grace liberate us from the power of shame in our lives?
7. Why do we sometimes struggle to abandon guilt or shame?
8. What would change in our lives if we let go of guilt and truly embraced God’s grace?

## Big Idea

We know something of what it’s like to be in the center of shame like this woman. There’s a line we cross from feeling convicted about a failure to feeling like we are a no-good-failure ourselves. Just like Jesus with this woman, grace does not condemn us, but stoops to us, forgives us, and liberates us from the power of guilt and shame in our lives...empowering us to get up and live differently!



# REVOLUTION

“Service, not Status”

## Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you created us for yourself and your greatest desire is that we would center our lives on your love for us. Forgive us for all the ways our lives revolve around lesser things. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and realign our orbit once again so that we gravitate toward your love for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Opening Question:** Can you think of a time when you really wanted to receive recognition for something?

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:3-11

Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus: Though he was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit. But he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant and by becoming like human beings. When he found himself in the form of a human, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God highly honored him and gave him a name above all names, so that at the name of Jesus everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## Discussion

1. What are some of the important status markers in our culture?
2. How does an obsession with power and status affect our priorities in life?
3. What does this passage tell us about Jesus?
4. From what you know about Jesus, what characterized Jesus' life of self-emptying service?
5. How does Jesus flip notions of status and power on their heads?
6. What are some of the gifts and challenges of a life that revolves around serving others?
7. What does emptying yourself and serving look like for you?

## Big Idea

Jesus sure seems to be more concerned with downward mobility rather than upward mobility. His life and ministry were defined by serving others in love, not seeking power, position or status for himself. This way of living was vindicated when he was raised from the dead. When we revolve around serving others, our lives look more like Jesus' life and we have the chance not just to embody Jesus more, but experience him more as we serve. Our sense of “the good life” is completely redefined!



# REVOLUTION

**“Belovedness, not Business/Busyness”**

## **Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, you created us for yourself and your greatest desire is that we would center our lives on your love for us. Forgive us for all the ways our lives revolve around lesser things. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and realign our orbit once again so that we gravitate toward your love for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Opening Question:** When you were a child, what did you first want to be when you “grew up?”

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:13-17

At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River so that John would baptize him. John tried to stop him and said, “I need to be baptized by you, yet you come to me?” Jesus answered, “Allow me to be baptized now. This is necessary to fulfill all righteousness.” So John agreed to baptize Jesus. When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him. A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him.”

## **Discussion**

1. Why do you think one of the first questions we always ask someone is “What do you do?”
2. What are some of the side effects of revolving so much around being busy and productive?
3. How was this moment in Jesus’ life an important identity moment?
4. Why do you think this scene takes place before he engages in any ministry?
5. How might this sense of his identity have impacted the business/busyness of his ministry?
6. Have you ever thought of yourself as God’s beloved? What does that mean to you and your sense of who you are?
7. What would have to be true for you to revolve more around that sense of belovedness when it comes to your identity?

## **Big Idea**

There is no doubt that our sense of identity has a complicated relationship with our work and busy life. It can be easy to conflate who we are with what we do. While what we do matters, it is not the deepest part of who we are. Our ultimate identity is a beloved one of God. That’s who we are at our core. The best version of ourselves is the one that is totally convinced of our belovedness in God’s eyes, not the one trying to work, or do business, or be busy to prove ourselves to God or anyone else. Rest in your belovedness!



# REVOLUTION

## **Wrap-Up**

What is the biggest thing God is saying to you after this study and these conversations?

What are you going to do about it?

What are your next steps?