



# LOVED + LIKED

**THE COURSE HELPING YOU TO EXPLORE HOW WE ARE ALL MADE  
UNIQUELY AND ARE LOVED AND LIKED BY GOD**

Six session Lent or study group course including a follow up celebration



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# OVERVIEW

- Session #1:  JOURNEY
- Session #2:  IDENTITY
- Session #3:  STORY
- Session #4:  CALLING
- Session #5:  EQUIPPING
- Session #6:  CELEBRATE

# COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- + To encourage everyone looking for truth and open to questions about Jesus
- + To encourage all people to journey further in their exploration of life in all its fullness
- + To explore how we are all made uniquely and are loved and liked by God
- + To find the confidence to discover some good news for us and others
- + To then live life to the full

## FOREWORD

**From Peter Hill**

Author of the Loved and Liked Course



We had previously run and enjoyed the LICC Fruitfulness on the Frontline course three times and realised that we wanted a prequel. We wanted to go back and explore who we were as 'real people' – all different with different joys, hurts, experiences and created differently in the first place. We wanted to look at how, perhaps surprisingly, we all have unique stories which are worth sharing and might also be worth taking to the next level.

We created this course material, reviewed it with leaders in different denominations and areas – city and rural. We then ran pilots in different areas with different leaders, reviewed it and refined it again. It has big questions, big challenges, food, fun and fellowship as we journey together.

It seems to work – sometimes very well – but it isn't perfect. Please email any suggestions for improvements or even encouraging stories...

Thank you to all who have helped and may you all be surprised and blessed.

**Peter Hill**

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## WELCOME

**From the Rt Revd**

**Rachel Treweek**

Bishop of Gloucester



A number of worshipping communities across the diocese have engaged with the LICC Fruitfulness on the Frontline course and I'm delighted to now recommend a prequel written by Peter Hill. The aim is to enable people to explore who they are as diverse individuals inhabiting different stories and carrying different joys and hurts, daring to discover yet more of the God who knows us by name, loves us and calls us to go on becoming who we have been created to be.

Discovering our unique identity cannot be separated from exploring who we are as people created to live in relationship with God, neighbour and creation in many different contexts, past and present, and it is hoped that the group interaction of the course will engage both the head and heart amid questions, challenges and encouragement. It is not a course seeking right answers but rather an invitation to take risk as we respond to Jesus Christ's offer of life in all its fullness wherever we find ourselves and in whatever circumstances.

Whilst this course was originally designed to be used during Lent, it can of course be used at any time during the year. Peter Hill and those who have shaped the course would love to hear your suggestions for improvements as well as your encouraging stories. This openness reflect the ethos of the course and I commend it to you. May God bless you through it and may you in turn be a blessing to the people and places of your daily life through who you are and what you do.

+ Rachel

# INTRODUCTION

## This course aims to help participants:

- + Enjoy some 'salty snacks' i.e. to provoke the realisation that whatever my age and stage, there is so much more I can discover
- + Understand that personal diversity isn't a mistake. It isn't just okay but is part of God's creativity
- + Understand that we really are profoundly liked and delighted in by the living God.
- + Get past self-limiting beliefs (e.g. I'm always useless at hospitality, my dad always said I was clumsy, I'm not gifted like that person)
- + Reflect and see that God has been actively involved with each of us. We are often too busy to stop and reflect
- + Create and recognise my personal creed; 'this I really know...the rest can wait.' 'I believe; help my unbelief.' We need to recognise what our own good news is so that we have something real to share
- + Recognise that this personal belief is part of our calling; God is already in our lives and interested and keen to take us further
- + Recognise that God equips me to flourish in my calling to live with Him and for Him wherever I am
- + Affirm one another in our distinct callings as His followers
- + Get out of the boat; be ready to take risks in order to know Him more
- + Recognise that as groups of believers we are commissioned to live dangerously

## Who's it for?

- + Everyone wanting the truth
- + Churchgoers: current and previous
- + Rural or city people
- + Old or young
- + At any stage of learning
- + Rich or poor, well or ill

# OUTLINE

There are six journeying sessions for use at Lent or anytime. They will each take about two hours in total. The session starts with meeting and eating (around 45 minutes), followed by videos, readings, exercises and discussions (around 75 minutes).

## The sessions address:

1. Journey - Am I on a journey or is this it?
2. Identity - Am I the wrong person or in the wrong place?
3. Story - What is my story so far?
4. Called - If that's true, what next?
5. Equipped - Shall I just try harder?

There is then a sixth session to review what we have learned, to celebrate and encourage one another. This could be held around Pentecost or later in year.

## Easy to facilitate

- + Pre scripted, video and written elements, with flexibility for creativity
- + Suggested timings with suggested parts to bypass if timings slip
- + Guidelines to explore 'new' facilitation approaches at the back

## Provision for continual personal development

- + Each session builds on the last
- + Opportunities between each session and beyond for personal engagement

- + Long term Christian or new or not
- + Leader, follower or questioner
- + Anyone who realises that there has to be much more to life than they have discovered so far
- + Those who hunger for more, even if they don't know what 'more' means
- + All those who want to explore a journey of following Jesus – wherever He is going



# SESSION #1

## JOURNEY

### AM I ON A JOURNEY, OR IS THIS IS IT?

## Personal introductions and eating together

(45 minutes followed by 75 minutes discussion)

### Course overview

Over these six sessions we are looking at our foundation as Christians:

- + Being loved and liked by God
- + How he has chosen and called us to live for him
- + How he gives us what we need to do that

This is the first of six sessions. Don't worry if you miss a session: there are both notes and people to talk to.

### Session introduction

Today we're going to explore how God loves us, how much more there is to being a Christian than we've discovered so far and how to explore faith more. We're going on a journey – individually and learning together from each other.

### Prayer and thanks

We will read a scripture and pray together before going further

“ **NIV:** *Matthew 7.8-9 - For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?*

### Prayer

Either use something like this prayer or create something around this:

☛ *Father God, together we thank you; that you are a good father who knows and really loves each of us here. This is an adventure in faith – please protect and encourage, comfort and provoke us to find you and follow you in new ways of life.*

*Jesus, you often taught using stories and parables which people struggled to understand, help us to be childlike in receiving them in these coming sessions together.*

*Holy Spirit – thank you for helping each of us already – please wake us up to what you're saying next - to everyone one of us here.*

*Amen*

### Course Rules

#### To Care for and Protect Each Other

We all come with hopes and hurts so it's important that we have game rules:

- + Confidentiality – please keep what is said within the group
- + If any session raises particular or big personal issues please ask at the end – but do ask
- + You are very welcome to ask questions as we go along – even if we come to that point later
- + Often we'll ask you to write down your personal response – you may be invited sometimes to share it
- + Just say 'pass' if you don't wish to comment
- + There is no desire to get a consensus view from the group – the main focus is for you individually to make your own discoveries, with help maybe on occasions from others
- + Please give honest responses, don't worry about giving the correct 'Christian' answers

# SESSION #1: JOURNEY



- + We are all on a journey; none are perfect, none have arrived
- + Feel free to ask 'stupid' questions because they aren't stupid. Someone else will be thinking the same thing
- + Find 'one thing' before the session ends, to take away and chew on - don't worry about all the other points
- + We will take it in turns to read scriptures if you are happy with that – just say pass if not

## No easy journeys

(12 minutes)

### Video: Dave Jeal's story

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

? What surprised you about Dave's journey: brief comments from everyone please

? What is a Christian? When Dave said to the young woman 'I'm a Christian' - why did the young woman say, 'I think not'?

## Is God still doing things today?

Let's read Psalm 23 in both the NIV & Message

(25 minutes)

“ **NIV:** *The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

“ **Message:** *God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing. You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from. True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction. Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure. You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies. You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing. Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.*

It was clear that King David could see God at work in his life.

? Do you recognise that God is doing things in your life? What sort of things? Have you got any examples? It doesn't have to be big.

Write them down for yourself and share anything you feel free to (in 3's or 4's or as a group)

? As you look at this Psalm, what is it that God wants to do for you?

? Does this Psalm promise a simple stress-free life?

## What sort of life does God want for each of us here?

(25 minutes)





# SESSION #1: JOURNEY

(Use one, two or three of the bible passages below as time allows)

- + God often helps us but we just don't notice the changes
- + Sometimes, we can't do things we once could – what new possibilities are there?

Let's read John 10.10 in both the NIV & Message

“ **NIV:** *I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.*

“ **Message:** *I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.*

## Finding 'Life in all its fullness'?

Let's try scoring these answers using points out of 10. Please give rough scores: 10 is wonderful, 5 is okay and 1 is 'starting': starting is good!

? Is Dave Jeal experiencing 'life in all its fullness'? – comments and 'scores' from everyone

? Are you experiencing 'life in fullness'? – comments and 'scores'

Let's read John 14.12 in both the NIV & Message

“ **NIV:** *Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

“ **Message:** *The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing.*

Oh really? Given all that Jesus did, to say that his followers would do greater things is pretty mind blowing!

? What do you think he might have really meant by this? Discuss in 3-4s or as a group

? Are there more things in our life journeys as disciples, left to see and do and be?

Let's read Matthew 7.9-11 in both the NIV & Message

(14 minutes)

“ **NIV:** *Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*

“ **Message:** *If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?*

? Is God good?

We probably all know of sadness and trauma and prayers not answered yet. There are things we do not understand but Jesus says that God is really good to us – He cares for us even more than a human parent cares for their child. Do you ever find yourself doubting this? Are there any examples where you recognise his goodness to you, even in small things?

All - Write down and share anything you feel free to (3 minutes)



# SESSION #1: JOURNEY

## Three Things to help us grow on our discipleship journeys

(10 minutes)

### 1. Prayer

#### Introduction and expectation setting:

Prayers get answered more often than realised - partially, completely or not what was expected at all.

How quickly does God answer prayers?

- + Abraham waited 25 years for the promise of a son to be fulfilled
- + Maybe you feel you are still waiting and still wanting prayers to be answered? What has already been answered?

? Can you think of any examples of answered prayers – small or large?

Write them down privately and share anything you feel free to:

? Are there any accomplishments in your life that, in hindsight, you would attribute to God’s help and provision?

- + God often helps us but we just don’t notice the changes
- + They say the best is always yet to come: what new possibilities are there for you to explore?

### 2. Trust

So what can He be trusted with?

Pause silently for one to two minutes and then write your thoughts down:

? Is there an area of my life or a specific issue that I might need to trust him with?

### 3. Be worldly wise

#### Recognise the alternative pressures on our lives from the world



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# SESSION #1: JOURNEY



? How would you define success? Own a Porsche, live in a mansion, live to 120? All – Shout some ideas out – what’s in all the advertising?

? What do you really want from your ‘abundant’ life?

All – share some examples as to what will put a big smile on your face.

## Video: Dave Jeal’s mother ‘Val Jeal - A very ordinary woman’

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

Discuss any surprises for you

## Summary of this session

(10 minutes)

Write down for yourself

Coming to the end of this session;

? Is there one key point, a surprise, an encouragement or a big honest question that you want to take away and work on this week to share next week?

Let’s have a time of silent prayer and then write down your response

(1-2 minutes)

? What is the one thing you want to do tomorrow – to try something out, pray, privately journal, anything else?

? Is there anyone you want to meet up with to discuss this further?

## Next session

Where, when, food?

(2 minutes)

## Pray for each other

Create your own or use something simple like this prayer:

(3 minutes)

✪ *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*







## SESSION #2

# IDENTITY

## AM I THE WRONG PERSON IN THE WRONG PLACE?



### Personal introductions and eating together

(45 minutes followed by 75 minutes discussion)

### Course overview

Over these six sessions we are looking at our foundation as Christians:

- + Being loved and liked by God
- + How he has chosen and called us to live for him
- + How he gives us what we need to do that

### Session introduction

Last time we looked at the experiences we each have of knowing God loves us. We also thought about being on a journey of faith and that there might be more to discover

This week we are going to expose those self-limiting views of ourselves that we all hold to some extent: we are going to address them by looking at what God says about us

### Prayer and thanks

We will read a scripture and pray together before going further.

Psalm 139.13

“ **NIV:** For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

### Prayer

☪ *Father God, together we thank you that you are good. You really love each of us here. Your plans for us to live life to the full, living with you and going your way, are amazing. Our experiences and glimpses of this way of life are patchy – have mercy on us please. We want to know you more.*

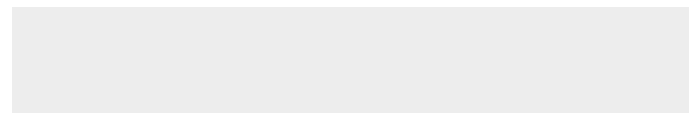
*Jesus, Immanuel – God with us: not just for Christmas but for life. We believe; help our unbelief. Help us to be childlike and trusting you; not our own understandings.*

*Holy Spirit we welcome you and need you badly.*

### Course rules reminder

Confidentiality, issues raised and private questions, handling questions in the session, feel free to say ‘pass’

? *Any surprises or helpful points from last week or thoughts on your ‘One thing’?*



Break into groups of three or four and share for two minutes – then share altogether as a group

# SESSION #2: IDENTITY



## Clones

(20 minutes)

Why didn't God just copy a winning formula – like Apple with iPhones? (218 Million last year from only five models). Why does He make life complicated by making everything different?

### Exercise with Post-Its

Everyone please draw a snowflake

? What differences did you see between the snowflake drawings?

? Why doesn't God just clone a successful solution?

Last week we heard from a former young football hooligan who was dramatically converted to following Jesus and what that meant for him – been a prison chaplain, now a navy chaplain – working amongst some tough and troubled guys to show and tell of God.

## A Different Story

### Video: Jo's story

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

? Any comments?

? How is Jo's story similar to Dave Jeal's in last week's video?

But what about me – the 'warts and all' me, the person I know I am, who fails to live up to God's standards and lets him down?

### Where are you on the 'Spiritual Scoresheet'?

Imagine you are on Strictly Come Dancing as a contestant. Talk to the person next to you about how you think you'd get on (are you a great dancer? Or do you have dad-dance-moves?).

Now imagine if God ran 'Strictly Being Loved' (a spoof of 'Strictly Come Dancing') where contestants were scored for how much God loved them. What score would the following people receive for how much they were loved by God?

? Minister/Vicar	<input type="text"/>
My Christian Hero	<input type="text"/>
Mother Theresa	<input type="text"/>
You	<input type="text"/>

? Which of these people would be loved most by society? Do you think God prefers some people more than others?

? Any feedback to the whole group?

# SESSION #2: IDENTITY



## Does God love me; does he really want me?

(20 minutes)

Read Zephaniah 3.14, 15 and 17 in two versions, so we have twice the chance to absorb it!

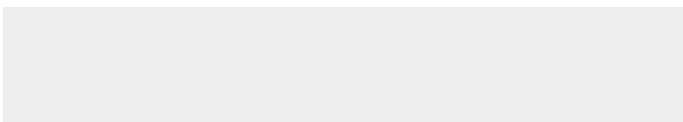
The prophet is talking to God's people Israel, before the time of Jesus.

“ **NIV:** Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm ... The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing.

“ **MSG:** So, sing, Daughter Zion! Raise the rafters, Israel! Daughter Jerusalem be happy! Celebrate! GOD has reversed his judgments against you and sent your enemies off chasing their tails. From now on, GOD is Israel's king, in charge at the centre. There's nothing to fear from evil ever again! ... Your GOD is present among you, a strong Warrior there to save you. Happy to have you back, he'll calm you with his love and delight you with his songs.

Let's look at this silently for a minute and listen to anything the Holy Spirit might be saying to us.

? Are you surprised that God delights in you?



Turning to make groups of three or four, can you discuss together:

? Why does this apply to us?

## Finding out what the Bible says about God's love

(20 minutes)

Relax in your seat, ask God to speak to you now and take note.

Isaiah 41.14

“ **NIV:** “Do not be afraid, you worm Jacob, little Israel, do not fear, for I myself will help you,” declares the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Romans 8.1-4

“ **MSG:** Those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death ... And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what the Spirit is doing in us.

Romans 8.15-16

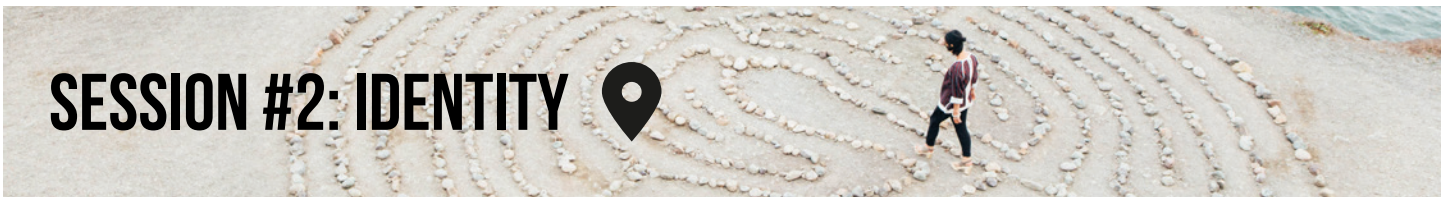
“ **NRSV:** For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Hebrews 10.14

“ **NIV:** For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Let's be silent for three minutes. Read those passages again, if you wish, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to know or underline a phrase that really strikes you.

# SESSION #2: IDENTITY



? Does anyone feel they can share something of that?

? What sort of God is He?

? Is there a character in a story – film, TV or book that you think God is like in some way? Discuss with the person next to you.

? Any feedback to the whole group?

## Video: Val Jeal

Becoming a Christian – a journey of life

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

Group discussion: do you think Val discovered what she was looking for?

## Next session

Where, when, food offers

## Pray for each other

We say together:

✉ *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.*



## Summary of this session

(8 minutes)

Write down for yourself

? What were the one or two key points (surprises, encouragements or big questions) that you are going to take away for this week's homework and maybe share next week?

? What is the one thing you want to do tomorrow – to do, pray, privately journal etc?

? Is there anyone you want to meet up with to discuss this further?





**SESSION #3**  
**STORY**  
**WHAT IS MY STORY SO FAR?**

## Personal introductions and eating together

(45 minutes followed by 75 minutes discussion)

### Course overview

Over these six sessions we are looking at our foundation as Christians:

- + Being loved and liked by God
- + How he has chosen and called us to live for him
- + How he gives us what we need to do that

### Session introduction

Last time we looked at how God seems to choose who He wants – disregarding who we think we are. This week we will look at ‘so what do I really believe’ after living all these years?

We’ll look at what we already love to do, perhaps even do rather well, without even realising it and then find a good way of expressing what is real and precious to us on our faith journeys so far. This course is like gardening – some hard work and graft, with the hope and expectation of fruit and flowers.

### Prayer and thanks

We will read Mark 9.24 and pray together before going further

“ **NIV:** “I believe; help my unbelief!”

Prayer – create your own or use something like this prayer to start with:

☛ *Father God, together we thank you; that you are a good father who knows and really loves each of us here. Your plans for Life in Abundance are great. Our experiences and glimpses of life are wonderful but far too patchy – have mercy on us please. – we want more.*

*Jesus, Immanuel – God with us – not just for Christmas but for Life. We believe – help our unbelief – help us to be childlike and trusting you – not our own understandings.*

*Holy Spirit – we welcome you and need you badly.*

❓ Any surprises or helpful points or reflections on your ‘One thing’ from last week? Break into groups of three or four and share for two minutes – then share altogether as a group.

#### **Video: ‘Dreaming dreams and strong anchors’**

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

#### **Video: ‘Calling and guidance - why did Val ever think that was a good idea?’**

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

❓ Do you think Val knew exactly what she was getting into?

❓ So what did she need to be able to start? - Discuss any points of interest to you.

# SESSION #3: STORY

? So, who am I, given that I also have been created uniquely? Write down/score privately and share anything you want to at the end (20 minutes)

? What do I most like doing? (Ask yourself: what could I do forever? Or what fills me with delight?)

? What am I good at? This could be anything 'secular' e.g. gardening, biscuit arranging, babysitting, art or something 'spiritual'.

(Helping point - If you find that hard to identify – try looking at what you get irritated by when others don't do it!)

(Helping point - It's a gift from God so it can't be smug boasting – except in what He has somehow managed to do almost in spite of you!)

? Is God interested in any of that? Write down a score from 1 - 10 and share anything you wish to.

? Does He want to encourage you further in using and developing these gifts?



All – is there anything you'd like to share? Any surprises now that you've started to think about it?

## So then - what do I really believe?

Let's create my personal creed - my personal core convictions about God (share a little, a lot or nothing afterwards)

(35 minutes)

### Most Things?

Colossians 1.16 Read bible in both the NIV & Message

“ **NIV:** For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

“ **Message:** For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.

“ **Personal Illicit version:** For in him most things were created, all that I can understand, see the purpose of and think God should get the credit for, the rest were a mistake which I don't really want to discuss

? Any surprises as to what is excluded? All discuss.

Read Mark 9.24 again in both the NIV & Message:

“ **NIV:** “I believe; help my unbelief!”

# SESSION #3: STORY

“ **Message:** No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the father cried, “Then I believe. Help me with my doubts!”

? Am I free to say to myself or to others this is what I believe, what I don't understand or what I don't believe?

? Isn't disbelief in church a bad thing? After all, we proclaim many truths and maybe written down creeds.

? Shouldn't I just believe everything; in the creed, bible etc.? All discuss.

## Create your own creed

A creed is a declaration of what you fundamentally and personally believe. This might come from experiences, church tradition, consensus, loyalty - many possibilities. This, however, is an opportunity for you to express what you personally have come to really believe or 'know' for yourself somehow.

### Guidelines for creating your creed:

- + Only capture things you really know or have experienced (a little or a lot) – not wished for.
- + Don't attempt to give the 'right' answer or things you haven't discovered yet – no need for correctness.
- + Don't include anything because you feel you should, ought to or would feel guilty if you left it out.
- + Just be creative in any style you like – bullet points, poem, words, diagrams, a single word etc.
- + Only focus on your personal experiences - don't worry about agreeing with the rest of the group at this stage.

? Are the one or two things that somehow you just really know or have discovered for real somehow in your faith journey? What are they?

Now have a go at writing your creed based on your discoveries above, using the guidelines above.

Share your 'creeds' in the group if you now feel happy to. Feel very free to say pass if you are not.

? Would you like to explain your creed to a friend? Any surprises? Discuss

## Summary of this session

(5 minutes)

Write down for yourself

? What were the one or two key points, surprises, encouragements, big questions, that you are going to take away for this week's homework and maybe share next week?

? What is the one thing you want to do tomorrow – to try, pray, privately journal, etc.?

? Is there anyone you want to meet up with to discuss this further?

## Next session

Where, when, food

## Pray for each other

Create your own or use something simple like this prayer:

☞ *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all*



## SESSION #4

# CALLING

## IF THAT'S TRUE – WHAT'S NEXT?

### Personal introductions and eating together

(45 minutes followed by 75 minutes discussion)

#### Course overview

Over these six sessions we are looking at our foundation as Christians:

- + Being loved and liked by God
- + How he has chosen and called us to live for him
- + How he gives us what we need to do that

#### Session introduction

Last week we looked at creating our own personal creeds – what we uniquely have discovered for real so far in our journeys of faith

This week we'll start to look at what some of the next steps might be. We will start by looking at taking risks! From learning to walk to riding a bike, we have taken risks in life...let's see what is next.

#### Prayer with thanksgiving

Explanatory introduction: we're all called to next steps on a 'risky' journey – individually and also together – sometimes easy, often not.

We will read a scripture, pray together and then start.

Matthew 11.28

“ **NIV:** *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

#### Prayer

Create your own or use something like this prayer to start with:

- ☛ *Father God, together we thank you; that you want to take us on a journey – a good journey.*

*Jesus, you chose disciples who made mistakes, fell asleep and missed the point. Thank-you that you similarly love us – please keep asking us, prodding us to follow you.*

*Holy Spirit – thanks-you for helping each of us already – please wake us up to what you're saying to everyone one of us here.*

*Amen.*

- ❓ *Any surprises or helpful points or reflections on your 'One thing' from last week? Break into groups of three or four and share for two minutes – then share altogether as a group.*

#### This Time - 'Risk Taking

We are not alone – we live with support and encouragement from God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit

(20 minutes)



#### Activity:

Using your 'wrong hand' try writing on a piece of paper three things you had for lunch. Think about your reactions before you start and afterwards. Pass the paper to the person on your left. Can you read it?



# SESSION #4: CALLING



## Video: Jimmy Rocks CMS

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

Turning to the person next to you, discuss as many of these questions as you can and wish to.

? What sort of risks did Jimmy take? Did the woman get better?

Could it have gone wrong? Would it have mattered?

What happens if you don't take risks?

How do you feel about taking risks when you don't know or understand everything? Can you minimise risk of failure?

What risks have you already taken in your faith journey?

Could we take small risky steps: those which wouldn't cost us very much even if they went wrong?

We recognise that we all have been confused or disappointed or hurt in life but, might we be able to trust God with a little more?

Let's read Matthew 7.9-11

“ **NIV:** “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Discuss in threes:

? Does our Father give us bad gifts sometimes? What do you think?

'Getting out of the boat' means being called out of our comfort zones and responding to His invitation.

Read Matthew 14.22-32 from the Message  
(20 minutes)

“ **Message:** As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain

so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night. Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. “A ghost!” they said, crying out in terror. But Jesus was quick to comfort them. “Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid.” Peter, suddenly bold, said, “Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come ahead.”

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, “Master, save me!” Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, “Faint-heart, what got into you?” The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, “This is it! You are God's Son for sure!

Let's be silent for two minutes to imagine being in this story. Notice what parts of the story get your attention, perhaps in a new way?

Now, together in twos or threes, look at any of these questions if they are helpful for you:

? Why did Peter get out of the boat?

What's the risk in getting out of the 'boat'?

Who called who?

Why didn't the others follow Peter?

Who made it possible for Peter to walk on the water?

What's the risk in staying in the 'boat'?

What would you have done?

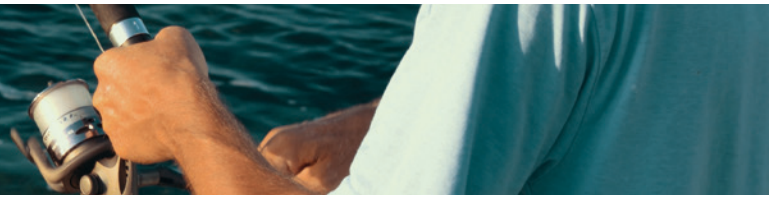
Share any thoughts together

## Video: 'Battle Scars and sensible retirement plans'

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

All discuss – is real life ever going to be easy?

# SESSION #4: CALLING



## The Big Caring Invitation

Read Revelation 3.14–18 then 19-20  
(15 minutes)

This is John's account of God challenging the church to be real, honest and turn to Him in new ways. His desire to eat with us is an extraordinary offer and act of friendship.

Background, Revelation 3.14-20

“ **NIV:** *To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

Invite God to speak to you through this passage, then write down:

? Is this saying anything this to me?

? Do I have anything to let go of?

? What might I welcome?

? Why is this written to a church?

## A risky prayer

Prayers can be of so many types: silence, crying, for others, for ourselves, listening or proclaiming. Sometimes though there are those 'risky' prayers where you know that by praying this prayer you are being trustingly vulnerable to God. You are giving freely of yourself, not fully knowing where it might all end up, really saying 'let your will be done' without approval from yourself.

A classic 'risky prayer' is John Wesley's 'Methodist Covenant Prayer'. This prayer has been used every year by the Methodists on the first Sunday in the year since 1755. A dangerous but brilliant prayer.

By yourself, read the prayer once to see what it says.

Pause for 60 seconds.

We're going to read it again together in silence, so no one is put on the spot. Feel free to join in if you want to pray this prayer silently or out loud and if you want God to put the desire in you for this sort of relationship with him.

Pause for 60 seconds afterwards.

# SESSION #4: CALLING



**I am no longer my own but yours.**

*Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing,*

*Put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid  
aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you.*

*Let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things,  
let me have nothing.*

*I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your  
pleasure and disposal.*

*And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy  
Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.*

*So be it. And the covenant made on earth, let it be  
ratified in heaven.*

*Amen.*

## Summary of this session

(10 minutes)

Write down for yourself

? What were the one or two key points, surprises, encouragements or big questions that you are going to take away for this week's homework and maybe share next week?

? What is the one thing you want to do tomorrow – to try, pray, privately journal?

? Is there anyone you want to meet up with to discuss this further?

## Next session

Where, when, food

### Pray for each other

Create your own or use something simple like this prayer:

? We worship you, the living God, who wants to come and eat with each one of us.

*In spite of our poverty, you want to clothe us and breathe new life into us.*

*Help us to trust you in a lifetime journey of risks with you – we so need your grace to do that.*

*So, encouraging one another, we pray for all of us here:  
May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.*

*Amen.*





# SESSION #5

## EQUIPPING

### SO DO I JUST TRY HARDER?



Photo by Alex:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO9CnS-NqO8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO9CnS-NqO8)

## Personal introductions and eating together

(45 minutes followed by 75 minutes discussion)

### Course overview

Over these six sessions we are looking at our foundation as Christians:

- + Being loved and liked by God
- + How he has chosen and called us to live for him
- + How he gives us what we need to do that

### Session introduction

So, you are loved, delighted in, fully known 'warts and all' and made unique for a purpose. You already know something real on your journey and started to 'join the dots' – what's next?

You have looked at what is real to you – your 'creed' so far.

Last time we started to look at 'callings', being invited 'to get out of the boat' and being willing to take risks on God. This week we will start to look at these callings – your personal calling as well as the calling we all have in common to be followers of Jesus.

We will also look at whether this is all down to you just trying harder again? Or might God want this even more than you and be keen to support us and equip us?

Some of this may seem a mystery – go away and pray and ask and wrestle and wrestle.

### Jeremiah 1.4-6: The Call of Jeremiah

“ **NIV:** The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were

born, I set you apart. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”

### Prayer

Create your own or use something like this prayer to start with:

☪ *Father God, you know our weaknesses and failings inside out – but you also bizarrely have faith and hope in us – because of Jesus’s extraordinary sacrifice.*

*Jesus, you called all of us here to be your disciples – we are not superheroes either – but please help us to hear and obey your calling.*

*Holy Spirit – thank-you for helping each of us already – please wake us up to what you’re saying next to every one of us here, en-courage us and give us your strength.*

? Any surprises or helpful points or reflections on your 'One thing' from last week? Break into groups of three or four and share for two minutes, then share altogether as a group.

Let’s look at the love of God for each of you here and the risk He takes with us:

### Video: ‘Calling and equipping’

Brokenness and treasure in clay jars.

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

Last time we looked at this dangerous prayer – this time we are going to explore what happens next.

# SESSION #5: EQUIPPING



Leader reads:

*I am no longer my own but yours.*

*Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing.*

*Put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid  
aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you.*

*Let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things,  
let me have nothing.*

*I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things, to your  
pleasure and disposal.*

*And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy  
Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.*

*So be it. And the covenant made on earth, let it be  
ratified in heaven.*

*Amen.*

## Your Calling

(30 minutes)

Warning to finding understanding and developing a sense of calling:

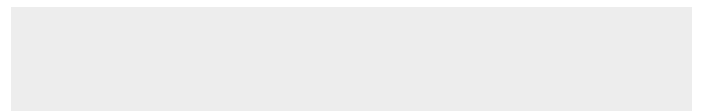
- + Sometimes a sense of calling comes out of what we are already gifted in but hadn't realised
- + Sometimes people think that the only real callings are the big ones like paid church workers. Real callings often appear to be little, too obvious, unglamorous e.g. being kind to strangers. They are all real.
- + Sometimes a calling seems to be in defiance of what we would humanly choose or think - like Jeremiah's calling
- + It may be that a calling could be for a time in our lives and that the Lord is now calling you to something new
- + You may get your understanding of 'calling' wrong, however, your obedience to what you understand and do is your worship anyway

To help each other to get started in recognising their gifts and calling and equipping (this needs three pieces of paper per person):

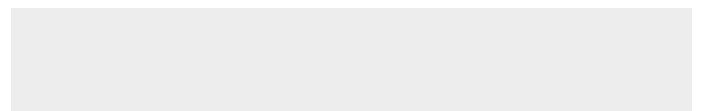
- + Put the name of the three people roughly opposite you – one name on each piece of paper
- + Write down in one or two sentences what you think they have a gift for
- + Put it in a basket
- + Leader – please share the responses by handing them back to the correct people without reading them out
- + Each – share one of your responses which is the most meaningful to you

Based on what I have read:

? What do I suspect that I am being encouraged and called by the Father to do next? Think about your creed – what is real and emerging for you?



? What or who would help me to understand that calling more clearly in the coming days and months – friends, family, church?



Write down privately an outline draft of your calling and next steps to get a better understanding of that calling. Share anything you feel free to.



# SESSION #5: EQUIPPING



## Equipping

A calling from God – to individuals or to a church - always comes with a possibility of equipping and enabling:

*(10 minutes introduction and scene setting scriptures)*

There are two types of equipping with gifts – what the Lord does for all of us and what He chooses to give different individuals.

Let's remind ourselves that God likes to give us good gifts:

“*If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*”

Some insights into the grace and power God gives to all of us:

We can also see that we are only earthen vessels – clay pots: 2 Corinthians 4.7 says:

“*Treasure is kept in clay jars. In the same way, we have the treasure of the good news in these earthly bodies of ours. That shows that the mighty power of the good news comes from God. It doesn't come from us.*”

Hebrews 2.4 New International Reader's Version (NIRV):

“*God showed that this message is true by signs and wonders. He showed that it's true by different kinds of miracles. God also showed that this message is true by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God gave them out as it pleased him.*”

It seems He gives good gifts almost in spite of who we are.

Read John 14.26 in both the NIV & Message

“**NIV:** *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*”

“**Message:** *The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you. I'm leaving you well and whole. That's my parting gift to you. Peace. I don't leave you the way*

*you're used to being left—feeling abandoned, bereft. So, don't be upset. Don't be distraught.*

Some thoughts about the specific gifts God gives to individuals

He gives and wants to give as a good father all sorts of gifts – just as He decides is best for each of us and for our church:

NIV Corinthians 12.4-11:

“*There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. To some people the Spirit gives a message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives a message of knowledge. To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. To others he gives the power to do miracles. To others he gives the ability to prophesy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages. All the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives gifts to each person, just as he decides.*”

Here is an example of specific equipping:

Jeremiah 1.4-10 Read Bible in the NIV

*(15 minutes)*

“**NIV:** *The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”*”

# SESSION #5: EQUIPPING



In twos or threes, discuss some of the following questions:



How did God equip Jeremiah?

Why does God seem to 'pick' on the insecure and inadequate? Why not choose heroes?!

How does God promise to help?

Does He still equip individuals? You?

Do you think He could or already has equipped you personally to fulfil his calling?

How does God help you to do stuff or act when it seems humanly difficult or impossible?

Could there more gifts to discover if you ask...or is this 'it'?

Think of a child you love – if they really, really want something how do they go about getting it?

Are there any examples in the group of people discovering they can do stuff that seems surprising to them?

Share anything meaningful to you from starting to look at gifts and equipping.

## Summary of this session

(10 minutes)

Write down for yourself



What were the one or two key points, surprises, encouragements, or big questions that you are going to take away for this week's homework and maybe share next week?



What is the one thing you want to do tomorrow – to ask for, try, pray, privately journal?



Is there anyone you want to meet up with to discuss this further?

## Next session

Where, when, food

Look back at the last five sessions and come to the next session ready to share 'one thing.'

## Pray for each other

Create your own or use something simple like this prayer:

*Father, as we come to terms with the realisation that you really love us, like us and you choose to give us good gifts; please help us to have a child-like trust in your calling and equipping for your good plans ahead. Father - please help us to show our trust in you as a good father and ask for gifts from you.*

*Jesus, you showed us how to live a life in abundance, not easy or comfortable but wonderful – please continue to knock at the door and call us.*

*Holy Spirit – please help us to hear your promptings and discover out how to 'get out of our boats'.*

*Together - May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

Amen



# SESSION #6

## CELEBRATE

### A CELEBRATORY REVIEW

Ideally Session 6 is organised close to a Pentecost church service to commission, pray, anoint and encourage everyone in the group.

## Personal Introductions and Eating Together

(45 minutes followed by 75 minutes discussion)

### Course overview

Over these six sessions we are looking at our foundation as Christians:

- + Being loved and liked by God
- + How he has chosen and called us to live for him
- + How he gives us what we need to do that

### Session introduction

- + We have come a long way, worked hard and hopefully found some encouragement together and individually
- + He loves and likes each one of us already
- + He's made us unique in His creativity and when we have 'joined the dots' we've seen something of what He has been doing in his calling and equipping for each one of us here in our stories so far
- + There will be more work, prayer and discussions needed over the coming weeks and months – but hopefully this has helped with some significant steps on that journey
- + We are going to celebrate what has happened so far, as well as looking to what comes next for us in our calling

## Lead prayer and thanks

### We're all called on a journey

#### Prayer

Create your own or use something like prayer this to start with:

- ☛ *Father God, together we thank you; that you are a good Father who knows and really loves each of us here. This is adventure in faith – please protect and encourage, comfort and provoke us to find you and follow you in new ways of life.*

*Jesus, your words are too simple sometimes – help us to be childlike in receiving them in these coming sessions together.*

*Holy Spirit – thanks-you for helping each of us already – please wake us up to what you're saying next to everyone one of us here.*

*Amen*

#### Video: 'Eyes Wide Open'

Videos available from [www.lovedandliked.life/resources](http://www.lovedandliked.life/resources)

Hope and desire for each of us: Acts 2.1-22

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost:

- “ **NIV:** *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

*Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews*



# SESSION #6: CELEBRATE



from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

“ **Message:** When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them. There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run. Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were thunderstruck. They couldn’t for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, “Aren’t these all Galileans? How come we’re hearing them talk in our various mother tongues? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; Visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,

Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene; Immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes; Even Cretans and Arabs! “They’re speaking our languages, describing God’s mighty works!” Their heads were spinning; they couldn’t make head or tail of any of it. They talked back and forth, confused: “What’s going on here?” Others joked, “They’re drunk on cheap wine.”

That’s when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: “Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this story straight. These people aren’t drunk as some of you suspect. They haven’t had time to get drunk—it’s only nine o’clock in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen: “In the Last Days,” God says, “I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people: Your sons will prophesy, also your daughters; Your young men will see visions, your old men dream dreams. When the time comes, I’ll pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women both, and they’ll prophesy. I’ll set wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, Blood and fire and billowing smoke, the sun turning black and the moon blood-red, Before the Day of the Lord arrives, the Day tremendous and marvellous; And whoever calls out for help to me, God, will be saved.”

## Discussion

(15 minutes)

? Who was included? Was anyone excluded?

Imagine being there, imagine this being in your village or town yesterday – what were the biggest surprises?

Does this suggest anything about prayer, persisting and waiting? How long had the Jews or the disciples been waiting – since Jesus, since Joel?

Is this neat and tidy or a ‘bit risky and out of control’?

Would you like to be there?

# SESSION #6: CELEBRATE



## Review

Looking back over the last six sessions, what for you personally are the stories, surprises or helpful points from the overall course?

(20 minutes)

In groups of three or four discuss and summarise for each of you:

? What is one significant thing you have discovered on this course?

If you're willing, share this one thing with the group.

## Prayer

For each other, in groups of three or four

(15 minutes)

- + Loved and Liked; Called and Equipped
- + On a life journey – still travelling
- + God is alive, delighting, enabling and inviting
- + Commission and anoint one another's (in a church service?)

## Summarise

Write down privately and individually

(10 minutes)

### Possible next steps

- + Review your course notes
- + Pray, discuss, experiment
- + Is there a prayer room you could support?

### Would anyone be interested in

- + Further prayer
- + Prayer partners/triplets?
- + Mentoring?
- + Finding a spiritual director?
- + Meeting as a group in one, three or six months?

## Potential follow-on courses

### LICC Fruitfulness on the Frontline

Eight sessions

### Video

[www.youtu.be/SyMMfy3FDE](http://www.youtu.be/SyMMfy3FDE)

### Gloucester Diocese

'Shapes for Living'

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living/](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living/)

### Pray for each other

Create your own or use something simple like this prayer:

☪ *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

Amen





# FACILITATORS' NOTES

You don't need formal qualifications to run the course, but you will need to be:

- + Sensitive and listen carefully to what people are saying and what they are really saying.
- + Intentional about your own discipleship journey; having a desire to grow, know and follow Jesus more despite your weaknesses and mistakes.
- + Willing to be vulnerable, none of us have 'arrived', we all make mistakes
- + Willing and wanting to help others, in preparation, prayer and running the sessions.
- + Have people you can sign post people to, if anyone asks difficult questions or issues you feel you can't address
- + Willing to ensure everyone has an opportunity to talk and be heard. Asking those who haven't said anything for a contribution or just being direct to the talkative may be needed!

## You don't have to do it all

Think who else could look after sorting out venues, food, handouts etc. Share the responsibilities around.

Is there anyone else you could co-lead it with – like a 'tag team'?

## Thanks

For deciding to serve these course members like this. Leading groups is always unpredictable but it's exciting to see how different people respond in different ways. Let's hope find joy, satisfaction and growth as you prepare, facilitate and reflect afterwards.

## Rough Timings

The notes have got suggested timings against each item. Don't worry about following these suggestions precisely; the important thing is to let everyone engage in some way and guide them to the end of the session.

If participants each find only one thing to really engage with – great result. They can use the notes, prayer and follow on conversations to develop the 'One thing' further or explore other points from the session.

Allow silences – not everyone can give immediate off the cuff responses.

Try to keep things gently moving without being too rigorous.

Ask at the beginning if it is critical to finish on time.

## Bypass option



If time is tight, some parts can be bypassed while making sure key outcomes are maintained. The red loop symbol indicates these.

## Group Sizes

About eight people including the leader is ideal. If there are more people than that, it may be helpful to break into smaller groups and just feedback a few key discoveries to the overall group. Big groups can make it impossible for everyone to say something but you can ask for volunteers (keep choosing someone who hasn't said anything before).

## Eating together

Is something else to organise but all the data shows it works really well. Something simple and bring and share is probably better than 'MasterChef' and less stress!

# FACILITATORS' NOTES

## CONTINUED

### 'Right' Answers

It is much more significant if each course member can engage with one question than be given 20 correct answers. Each group will have a significant diversity of experiences – both joys and hurts. Many people are tempted to give the 'correct answer' and not to let the side down by showing uncertainty or doubts. Gently and respectfully encourage reality and honesty. It is helpful even if people can just be honest with themselves by writing their responses down. They don't have to share them with the group.

### Group management

Mutual respect is really important, giving everyone the opportunity to ask, contribute and listen. Some people are natural talkers, some need sensitive encouragement to talk, some won't want to talk (that is okay) and some need to be firmly and kindly stopped from dominating or introducing 'rabbit holes'! Encourage people to only add something new and previously unsaid.

### Course notes

To encourage people to use during and between sessions

- + write on them and use them however they find helpful (or use Post-it notes if they aren't comfortable writing on the materials)
- + summarise their 'One thing' from the sessions
- + take the notes away and work on something that has life and meaning to them
- + read and pray about the next session's questions and for other group members

These notes are intended for leaders and members. They can be augmented with further reading, scriptures, websites etc.

The videos are shown in **yellow**.

The timings are approximate.

☉ Prayers use a symbol and look like this. You can use these or create your own.

“ All the bible readings use this symbol and look like this. They could be read from:

- + Any modern translation to suit your group e.g. NIV (shown below – Copyright acknowledged), NIRV, NRSV, etc
- + Any paraphrase version e.g. Message (shown below - Copyright acknowledged)
- + Think about what will work best for your course members?
- + Using a translation with the Message often helps to make well known passages jump to life e.g. did it really say that?

### Between sessions

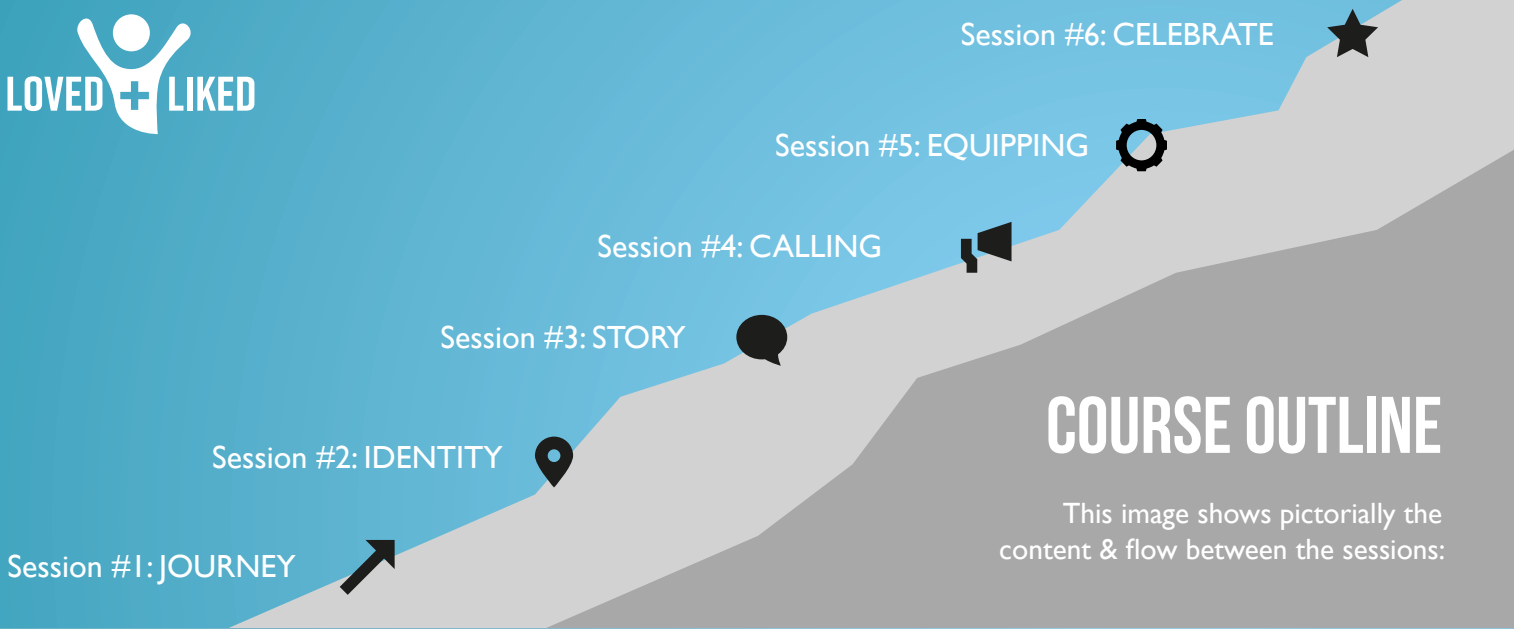
- + Think about who said a lot or very little.
- + Reflect on what worked well in the session and also on what could be better for the next session.
- + Encourage members to meet for coffee, phone or discuss anything that arises or intrigues them: some will, some won't.
- + Affirm yourself.

### Printed Copies and Video Links

For printed copies of the course and for access to videos, please see the Loved and Liked website:

**[www.lovedandliked.life](http://www.lovedandliked.life)**

The image on the next page shows pictorially the content and flow between the sessions.



### Session #1: Journey

1. **Is there more to faith than this or have I arrived?**
  1. LIFE in abundance???
  2. You will do greater things than these???
2. **Is He still alive and interested and doing stuff every day around you?**
  1. Reflect and see that God has moved, answered prayers over the last 12 months..
  2. Living with suffering
  3. Dream - what might be possible?

### Session #2: Identity

1. **Understand that your personal diversity isn't a mistake**, isn't just OK, but is part of God's creativity
2. **Understand that you really are profoundly liked**, delighted in (Proverbs 8v31, PS147v11, etc), loved Ro 8v15 etc (not cabbage style love..AKA it's not nice but it's good for you!))
3. **Get past self limiting beliefs** ... even as a ineffectual worm (Is 41v14) ...we have been empowered - treasure in cracked pots (2Cor 4v7)
4. **Is that really true?** Why in one sentence or score out of 1-10. Uncertainty and fear is fully welcomed

### Session #3: Story

1. **What are you good at? What do you do?**
2. **What don't I know, what can't I do...does that matter?** - this 'little' I really really know, the rest can wait... 'I believe help my unbelief', to recognise their personal good news... to then be equipped to share something real
3. **Create and recognise your personal 'creed'** - this 'little' I really really know, the rest can wait... 'I believe help my unbelief', to recognise their personal good news... to then be equipped to share something real to them

### Session #4: Calling

1. **Would a father give his child a stone? Trusting in goodness...getting out of the boat**
2. **Risk & relationships?**
3. **Willing to give it a 'go'?**
4. **Risky Prayer?**

### Session #5: Equipping

1. **Who wants this more - you or the Lord**
2. **Would He help you - or are you a DIY job?**
3. **How can you know that calling more & find that equipping?**
4. **Pray together ask...**

### Session #6: Celebrate!



# CHURCH SERVICES

## Integrating church services

At Lent or any other time

- + It would really help if church leaders could:
- + Support and encourage people to join in the course.
- + Align any sermons or talks with the course sessions.
- + Encourage prayer for everyone going on and facilitating the course sessions.
- + Encourage offers of lift sharing for older people.
- + Plan a commissioning service to support the final session. It is suggested that this is for all the church not just for course members.
- + Consider what mentoring, pastoral, discipleship development opportunities could follow this course in your church.

## Pentecost

Potential inclusion in Pentecost service by leader(s) - including anointing (as an act of commissioning):

*(Thanks to Rev Natalie Burfitt)*

This can be used with the whole church whether people have or have not attended the Loved and Liked; Called and Equipped course.

### Pentecost Sunday morning service

In the sermon, talk about the uniqueness of our individual callings and that the Holy Spirit equips each of us to love and serve God in ways only each one of us can. Explain that this anointing is a sign of being set apart for a specific task for God and offer the invitation to receive this.

After communion, instead of returning to their seats, people went to the back of the church where two of us were stationed with oil (of chrism).

Anointed their hands using these words:

*(Name) May God*

*Who anointed the Christ with the Holy Spirit at his baptism*

*anoint and empower you to witness to his love in N place e.g. St Natalies school*

*Amen*

At the end of the anointing we put both of the person's hands together (in a sort of prayer pose).

Other churches experience. There was a tangible sense of people experiencing God's spirit in this action. We were amazed at the response, expecting only of few to come forward but most of the congregation taking up the invitation. It was profoundly moving.

# FEEDBACK TO ME

## Please:

Any comments before, during or after the course from anyone's experiences – please email them to me however small or large:

[peter@farblueyonder.co.uk](mailto:peter@farblueyonder.co.uk)

I am open to encouragement, enhancements and challenges.

## After Each Session:

Possible questions for group facilitators to email within 24 (or 48 tops) hours of completing each session:

1. What elements did the group like and find helpful?
2. What elements did the group not like, disagree with, or find confusing?
3. Which of the following would best describe the amount of material for the session:
  - + Too much
  - + Too little
  - + About right
4. Do you think that by the end of the session, the session aim had been met for the whole group? Please elaborate briefly.
5. If you could make any improvements to the session, what would they be?

## After the final session: ideally within a week

1. In your opinion, what is the best thing about this course?
2. Length of the course and number of sessions: was it too long, too short or about right?
3. Did the group seem to be engaged throughout, or did interest wane at any point?
4. Was there a sense that this was something new, interesting, and worthwhile? Or did it feel like you were covering old ground?
5. Did some types of people seem to connect with the material more than others? (e.g. old/young, employed/unemployed, male/female etc.)
6. To what extent are you encouraged by the impact this resource has had on group members? Any particular examples you can share?
7. Did you get the impression group members were able to connect the material with their day-to-day lives?
8. How would you describe the balance between Bible, conversation, reflection, and prayer?
9. To what extent did people engage with the material/homework between sessions?
10. Would you recommend this course to other groups?
11. Are there any ways you've not already mentioned that you think would improve this course?

Thanks for your time.

# NEXT STEPS

If you have enjoyed the Loved & Liked course and want to explore some of the themes or subjects raised further - then here are some links you may find helpful.

Many thanks to both the copyright holders and all the following organisations.

## The London Institute of Contemporary Christianity

LICC have created an excellent range of creative resources, training, books and courses, for both young and old. See <https://www.licc.org.uk/>

They help many churches and individuals to find and celebrate their divine callings wherever they are. I am indebted - thank you.

LICC Fruitfulness on the Frontline - an Eight session course is one example I recommend. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyMMfyy3FDE>

## Church

Many different churches in different denominations and areas, are doing some wonderful things and being disciples in ways that surprise me. If you've been 'burnt' by church - look again and find a church that is a community where you can worship in 'Spirit & truth'. They all have flawed human beings - but sadly and thankfully - Jesus seems to 'collect' people like that!

## LIFE

Here in Gloucestershire in the Anglican church with thanks to Bishop Rachel - we are working out the LIFE vision. See <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/>

Jesus's words to a struggling nation and people still bring hope, "I have come that they may have LIFE, and have it to the full."

## 'Shapes for Living'

This is another reflective course. See [www.gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living/](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living/)

## 'Liedentity'

Liedentity looks particularly at the challenges of being 'Loved and Liked' as young people See <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/?s=lidentity>

## Ignatian 'Spiritual Exercises'

This is a much older course than this, which many have found transformational.

## 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION

Graphics and website designed by Matt Doherty [www.mattdoherty.co.uk](http://www.mattdoherty.co.uk)

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