



## Session Five: The Way of Salvation

“In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...” *1 Peter 3:15*

### GOAL

*Understanding Salvation and Conversion as a journey with multiple mileposts – involving both process-over-time and epiphany-like encounters.*

### Practice Review

- Who did you PRAY FOR over this past week?
- What kind of things did you pray for? Did you have “a sense” of how you should pray for them?
- Was it just a couple times, or more often?
- Is there a connection between who you have been NOTICING and who you have been PRAYING FOR?

### Telling Our Stories

- Our theme verse has this phrase: “*give the reason for the hope that you have.*” Can you identify one of the factors that led you into relationship with Jesus?
- What were you looking for, hoping for, in turning to Jesus?

### Discover

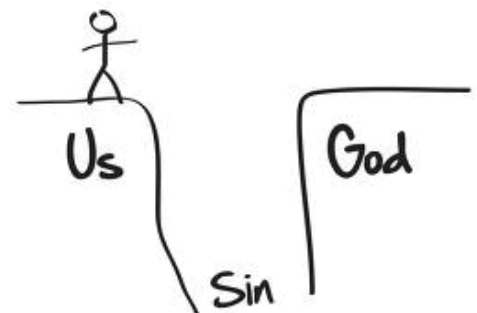
**Video clip:** *Francis Collins’ journey to faith in Jesus*

- Can you identify some of the factors that Collins mentions regarding his own journey to faith in Jesus Christ?

### Read

#### JOURNEY TO FAITH IN JESUS (RESOURCE #6)

- Can you identify where Francis Collins was at on this continuum in those video clips?
- Can you “more or less” describe your own journey to faith using these markers? Share your story about how long it took for you to progress along this continuum. (Some of us, raised in Christian homes, may only start at -6, already aware of the Jesus Story)
- Think of the people you have been “noticing” – can you locate their movement along this scale? Does this help you understand where they have come from and how you might be able help them take one step more?



## Reflect on this statement:

“...a high degree of formation is required before we even begin to know what we need to be saved from, much less for.” [Stone: 266]

### Connecting Word and Deed

We want to develop habits and practices that help us to connect our desire to live as godly, loving Christians (deeds) alongside our desire to communicate to others the “good news” that we have found in Jesus (words). These practices are spiritual discernment exercises. We need to learn how to pay attention to what God the Holy Spirit is already doing in the lives of the people within our spheres of influence. **Our task is not to “evangelize” our friends; our task is to bear faithful witness as we participate with what God is already doing in their lives.**



### The Practice: Listen

We often forget the fact that God gave us two ears and only one mouth for a reason. We are often more eager to talk to someone about Jesus rather than the equally important art of listening to them, in Jesus.

**Move in close, lean in and say “How are you?” and actually mean it, and actually wait for a response, and then go as deep as they want to go.** This practice promotes other-centred-ness. By listening to their story, by entering in on their terms you are learning that this life is not all about you.

When you listen, try this, listen for the contours of the journey -- which we have been discussing -- in their story.

- o What would good and whole, and “as it should be,” look like according to them?
- o What do you hear of their aching heart? What are they yearning for?
- o How do they describe why they aren’t realizing that? What is broken in them?
- o How are they seeking to solve their discontentment?
- o Does God-language ever show up in their story-telling?

The goal here isn’t to find the weakness in their argument and worldview, it’s to genuinely seek to understand your friend at their deepest levels.

You might want to try creating environments where you as a group create space where you can hear other people’s stories. Groups can host dinner parties and BBQs and invite their small group friends and their friends from other social circles. **We call this *friend-smashing*.** It’s a good practice. The goal is to listen. To host. To open up space in your life to include these others.

**Assignment:** This week. Move in close with a friend you have been noticing and praying for – lean in and say “How are you?” and wait for a response, and then go as deep as they want to go.

Could we have a discussion about hosting a “*friend-mashing*” house party?

### Prayer

**God of the Universe, who notices us, who draws us to yourself, who listens to us; please give me ears to truly hear the stories of my friends. Father, prompt me this week to listen to my friend \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**God, as we co-labour together in the life of my friend, will you continue to draw him/her to Jesus, and to the same renewal of spirit that I have found in relationship with You. Amen.**