

### **ICE BREAKER:**

What is your favorite season of the year and why?

### **SCRIPTURE:**

Ephesians 4:32-5:5

1 John 2:6

Matthew 5:8

Romans 14:19

James 1:20

Colossians 3:12-15

Luke 19:10

John 15:13

### **QUESTIONS:**

- What are the characteristics of sin? What are the characteristics of a believer? (Reference Galatians 5:19-26)
- What do you think of this quote by Mahatma Gandhi, "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."
- Why do actions speak louder than words? (Proverbs 20:11)
- What happens when government (at all levels) tries to legislate morality? (The intent of the question is to draw the conclusion that government legislated morality follows the cultural norms). What happens when Christians, out of the love and grace of Jesus Christ, love on those who do not know Christ? (The intent is to draw out that people's hearts are changed and while not perfect, they desire to live a life pleasing to Christ). Of the two; which has a greater benefit and impact on humanity? [DO NOT LET THIS BECOME A POLITICAL DISCUSSION, the point is to highlight that true change comes from a changed heart, a true follower of Christ loving others, who then are changed and love on others, who are then changed and love on others and so on.]
- What drew you to church? How do you think our church looks to those on the outside now?
- Have you ever been part of a ministry (Sunday School, Connect Group, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Choir, etc...) where you found one or more individuals extremely difficult to get along with? Why? What did you do about it? How did it all end?
- Read Colossians 3: 12-15: How do Christians treat each other? How should they treat each other? Have you ever been part of a church that split over an argument? What happened in the end? Have you ever been hurt at church? What happened?

- Pastor Rick stated, “When Christians have the character of Jesus you can’t keep people from the church.” What does that look like? How are you contributing to making our church embody the character of Jesus?
- John the Baptist, who is claimed to be one of the greatest prophets ever (Matthew 11:11), says of Jesus, “He must decrease, but I must decrease.” What does this mean? What does this mean for you? How does this practically play out in your day to day life?
- Pastor Rick said in his sermon, “My rights are less important than someone else’s need for Jesus.” Does this just apply to nonbelievers or does it include believers as well? Where is it hardest for you to subvert your rights for another (e.g. at home with your spouse, at work, on the road...)?
- How important are people to you? What is more important, being right, being heard or maintaining love and peace? Truthfully, do you love people more than anything?
- Are you angry? Why? How does it affect your message for Christ?
- Honesty time, what area of your life can you identify that needs to be changed in order to “Live the Message?” Do you have someone in your life that can help you, walk with you (Proverbs 27:17)? The Christian life is a journey, a difficult journey that can be confusing. We are pursuing perfection (Matthew 5:48) even though that will not happen in this life. We have to be open and honest about our failings and mistakes because that makes us real but we cannot be comfortable in them or fall into the trap of, “I am pretty good” or “this part of my life is good enough.” We must strive to be like Christ while resting in His grace and love. (Hebrews 10:19-25 // Hebrews 12:1-2)