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## WEEK 2 COVENANT PARTNER CLASS VIDEO SCRIPT

### **Vow #2 (Sanctification) By God's Grace, I will seek the Holy Spirit's continual transformation in my life**

- I believe scripture is my final authority in my decisions and actions, and I strive to follow its teachings (2 Timothy 3:16:17)
- Being part of a community of believers is essential to a flourishing life in Christ (Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25)
- I will seek to worship God faithfully through my daily life and, corporately, with the Church wherever I might be (Romans 12:1-2)
- I will seek out Christian teaching and fellowship to feed my soul, build friendships, and share support as I seek to faithfully follow Christ (Acts 2:42)
- I will engage in discipling relationships, with mutual accountability, to better enable me to more faithfully follow Christ (2 Timothy 2:1-2)
- I will seek to live a life of generosity and grace in every area of my life, using my time, talents, finances, and resources (Matthew 6:19-21)

### **Outline**

- Flourishing in a community of believers
  - ▶ Facilitating and Modeling Worship
  - ▶ Gathering for Teaching and Fellowship
  - ▶ Fostering Discipleship and Mutual Accountability
  - ▶ Supporting and Encouraging Service

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It is my pleasure to join you for this video, discussing vow #2, I will seek the Holy Spirit's continual transformation in my life. I am Sherry Ettlich, an Elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church and the coordinator for this New Covenant Partner Class series.

As mentioned in the first video, when looking at the beginning of our faith walk, it is a life-long journey. God intends us to be continually transformed by the Holy Spirit as we better understand and allow Jesus to truly be Lord of our lives. Partnering with other believers is essential to that growth, and to be an active participant in carrying out God's mission to reach our world. This week focuses on flourishing in a community of believers as you contemplate partnering with believers at WPC to accomplish God's mission and purposes in this Valley and around the world.

*Take a moment to pause this video and think about the people or communities of believers that have impacted your faith walk so far.*

When thinking of a community of believers, it often first calls to mind Worship within a Church family and the sacraments provided through a Church: baptism, communion, and marriage. We'll start there in this video, but go beyond that to look at other ways a church family supports your continual transformation by the Holy Spirit.

## **Facilitating and Modeling Worship**

Corporate *Worship* in a church setting is probably the most common practice across all communities of believers. Services have evolved to have similar components. The music and readings are uplifting. We carry away new insights from the teaching. We are challenged to more closely follow Jesus. We build friendships with those we worship with. However, is this what worship is all about? Is it really all about us? No, it's really about God and our relationship with Him.

Jesus says, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me” (Matthew 15:8-9a). Jesus is reiterating a common theme in His teachings — what is important is not merely the actions we take, but our hearts, our motivations, the emotions and thoughts that are behind our actions. John Piper, a long-time pastor and teacher, sums it up in “true worship is based on a right understanding of God’s nature . . . a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things.” He goes on to say, “The inner essence of worship is the response of the heart to the knowledge of the mind when the mind is rightly understanding God and the heart is rightly valuing God.”

*Take a moment to pause this video and think about the various ways you worship God, the ways you express your valuing or treasuring of God above all things.*

Worship should be part of all we do. The motivation behind all our actions. Corporate Worship provides us with a model and shared worship experience as we acknowledge who God is through praise in song and words, as we seek to know him better through prayer and teachings, as we seek to follow him more closely through repentance and correction, and as we share what we have through our time, tithes, and gifts. However worship should not stop at the church doors. Worship should characterize our faith walk in all we do — our personal prayer life, bible reading, and reflection, in our interactions with others and all the tasks and challenges we undertake to serve God in this world. It is in these actions that we show God’s supreme value to us and our willingness to make sacrifices for the betterment of others.

As Paul writes in Romans 12:1, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers [and sisters] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” Worship is surrender. Giving our whole self – heart, mind, soul, and strength – to the God who gave His Very Self for us. It means offering our hopes and dreams to God and allowing God to shape them into the abundant life He has for us. It means spending our time on the things that are important to God, honoring to God. Investing our energy and passions into those things that build up God’s kingdom on this earth, not tear it down. It means giving ourselves fully over to God so that God can transform us into the people God meant for us to be.

## **Gathering for Teaching and Fellowship**

From the beginning of the church believers gathered for *teaching* and *fellowship* (Acts 2:42-47). Gathering with other believers can feed your soul and provide essential friendships and support. Studying the Bible together with a knowledgeable teacher can enhance and round out our personal Bible reading and study, allowing us to gain greater insights into who God is and who He would have us be. The friendships we build through various fellowship activities can be an anchor for us in a world where our values and beliefs do not align with others.

*Pause this video and ask yourself: Was there a time when your faith, values and beliefs made you stand out as different from others? How did being with other believers help ground you and confirm the rightness of your values and beliefs?*

As Jesus says in John 5:19, “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hates you.” While the level of hatred focused on Christians has varied across the ages and across our globe, the sense of “otherness” is a constant. Gathering with other believers gives us a sense of belonging that we may not feel anywhere else, and affirms that our values and beliefs are right and good.

However, we are not called to isolate ourselves in a Christian “bubble.” The Great Commission charges us to go out into the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). This requires intentionality and will be discussed in more detail in the week 3 video. However, I want to mention it in this context since some fellowship activities should be planned with non-believers in mind. With all the press in our world, many may feel the Church is not a safe environment, but a judgmental and cold place. We need create opportunities where we can meet and befriend non-Christians, gradually introducing them to other Christians and the Jesus we know and love. Fellowship activities can play a role here, introducing non-believers you have built relationships with to other believers in a safe environment where they feel welcome and can see in action how Jesus can transform lives by meeting you and your friends. Such encounters with you and others can foster their curiosity about Jesus and their coming to that initial step of faith in Christ.

## Fostering Discipleship and Mutual Accountability

*Pause this video and think about a person who deeply impacted your faith walk, who helped you deepen your relationship with God, or who helped you more fully surrender all areas of your life to God's leading.*

**Discipleship** relationships have been essential since the birth of the church to deepen our faith walk. They happen in small groups or one-on-one where we can openly talk about the challenges we are facing and gain Biblically-based advice and guidance. Jesus modeled this relationship with His disciples. Early church leaders built similar relationships, such as the one between Paul and Timothy.

Discipleship can happen in a small group of Christians who are at similar places in their faith walk as the role of disciplining and being disciplined switches back and forth depending on the challenges that arise in each individual's life, or when individuals are at very different places in their faith walk with those more experienced, disciplining newer Christians. Over your lifetime, you should be involved in multiple discipleship relationships, both ones where you are disciplining a newer Christian and ones where you are being disciplined by a more experienced Christian.

A key component of an effective discipleship relationship is **mutual accountability**. Those we are in close disciplining relationships with may more easily see where we are struggling or falling short, lending a supportive hand to help us overcome that challenge. They can lovingly challenge our misconceptions and help us work through our blindspots. The trust and openness that is a cornerstone of the disciplining relationship facilitates mutual accountability whether coming from a newer or more experienced partner in that relationship.

The goal of mutual accountability is to encourage and build one another up, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting meeting together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25). It is also to humbly provide gentle correction, "If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

Are you currently in a discipleship relationship? If not, WPC can connect you with a small group of believers to study God's Word, share, pray, and hold each other accountable. Ask about it at this week's discussion or check out the rack of cards in the Narthex, just outside the Gathering Space.

## Supporting and Encouraging Service

Christians are called to **serve**. Peter instructs, "each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10). Stewardship requires that we look at all aspects of our life and how we use all God has given us. We are called to be generous with both our time and money.

*Pause this video and think about the ways you are financially supporting the furthering of God's work.*

Through Christian history, individuals have financially supported local churches, empowering those churches to carry out God's mission locally and beyond. By tithing to a local church family, such as WPC, we are entrusting them to use our combined funds to further God's mission in the Rogue Valley and across the world. Some goes to supporting the functions of our church, but also to provide ongoing support to various missions, enabling others to act as God's hands and feet, bringing His love and light to the world. Beyond supporting mission activity through WPC, you may also want to support specific missions God lays on your heart with financial gifts.

However, giving of ourselves does not stop with monetary support. We are also called to give of our time. Our service is an outpouring of our relationship with Christ. It is a chance to give back in response to all that God has given us. It is an opportunity to put our faith in action as we partner with God in His mission for this world.

*Pause this video and think about the ways you are currently personally serving others either within a church, in the community, or possibly even through a short-term mission.*

Service can take many forms and is often best done in partnership with other believers. WPC offers many opportunities to serve both inside and outside the church. You may work with our kids, lead a small group, participate in Choir or the Praise Band, be a greeter or usher, make coffee, bake communion wafers, help in the church office, or fill any of a multitude of needs within the Church. You may chop wood to deliver to needy community members, read with kids at Washington elementary, volunteer with Kids with a Mission, or meet another one-time or ongoing need where you can share your time and talents to meet the needs of individuals in our local community. WPC partners with local organizations to extend our reach as well as financially supports mission partners around the world.

## **Closing**

Thanks for watching this video! Your next step is to participate in the Week 2 discussion. You should get an email and/or text reminder. In preparation for that discussion, please spend some time reflecting on the four questions that came out of this video in the Week 2 Handout.

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### ***Questions for Reflection and Discussion Slide & Handout***

1. *Did this video change your perspective of worship as you thought more about worship as an expression your valuing or treasuring of God above all things? If so, in what way?*
2. *Do you regularly gather with other believers for teaching and fellowship?*
  - a. *What activities help ground you and confirm the rightness of your values and beliefs?*
  - b. *What activities give you a sense of belonging even though our our beliefs and values can be so different from our world's?*
  - c. *What types of activities are you drawn to that strengthen your relationship with Jesus and empower you to reach out to others?*
3. *Can you think of a person who deeply impacted your faith walk, who helped you deepen your relationship with God, or who helped you more fully surrender your life to God's leading? Is there a particular instance that you would be willing to share in our discussion group?*
  - a. *How has mutual accountability with a trusted partner deepened your relationship with God? What do you find particularly challenging or helpful about this type of relationship?*
  - b. *What has been most rewarding or challenging about participating in a discipling relationships? How did that impact your ability to more fully surrender yourself to God?*
4. *In what ways are you ways you are currently serving others either through a church, in the community, or beyond?*
  - a. *How are you giving of your finances to further God's mission, either through WPC or to another organization or individual?*
  - b. *How are you giving of your time to further God's mission, either in conjunction with WPC or elsewhere?*
  - c. *Has God prompted you to make a change in what your are doing to serve Him by serving others?*