

Overflow

Small Group Curriculum

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Week 1

What is Overflow?

- Some people say that each one of us has a God-shaped hole in our heart.
 - They say that we try to fill that hole with other things: relationships, money, etc.
 - They say that we'll never be satisfied; we'll never be complete until we allow God to come in and fill the hole in our heart.
- That sounds nice, but it's not true.
 - God doesn't desire to come in and fill a part of your life.
 - He desires to fill EVERY part of your life.
 - He desires to MORE than fill you.
 - He desires to OVERFLOW every area of your life.

Discuss: What do you think Overflow looks like in the life of a Christian?

What do you think Jesus meant when he said that we would have streams of living water flowing from within us? (John 7:38)

- One of the most practical ways you can see overflow work in your life is through giving.
 - Why? Finances is the ONE AREA where God invites us to test him
 - Malachi 3:10
 - Luke 6:38

Discuss: Why do you think God allows us to test him in our finances? Why do you think more Christians don't take God up on his offer?

- Overflow isn't something that God desires just for the HOLIEST Christians.
 - It's not something that he wants just for pastors and missionaries.
 - It's his plan for every Christian!
 - It's his desire that each and every one of his followers experience the abundant life... the life overflowing.

Discuss: What is it that keeps Christians from living a life that overflows?

What is it that keeps YOU from living a life that overflows?

Week 2

Where does Overflow come from?

- Anyone can have things in their life that spill over into the lives of those around them at times. That's not necessarily overflow.
 - It's not even necessarily overflow when it happens in the life of a Christian.
 - Overflow happens when God fills you in such a way that your life overflows continuously, in every area.
- You have to keep that in mind when it comes to overflow.
 - It isn't something that you muster up inside of yourself.
 - It isn't something that you do on your own.
 - Overflow is entirely dependent on God.

Discuss: What is the proof of true overflow? How do we distinguish God's overflow from our own efforts?

- Without God, overflow is impossible.
 - Without God, our only hope lies in our own efforts, which won't last.
 - Without God, we have no hope of making a lasting impact on our world.
- At the same time, we don't step back and leave it all to God.
 - The Bible says that faith without works is dead.
 - James 2:17
 - You've got to do your part in the overflow process!
 - Work like it depends on you, pray like it depends on God.

Discuss: How do we balance faith and works? How do we know when we've strayed from the right balance?

- There's no mysterious formula for experiencing the abundant life.
 - God doesn't pick his favorites and pour blessing onto them.
 - Rather, God moves in a person's life in the capacity that they allow him to.

- God doesn't play favorites.
 - When a person is sold out to God, there's no limit to what God can and will do in their life.
 - He will move in your life in powerful ways.
 - Just as he moved in the lives of spiritual giants before you.
 - You have to pursue him with the same intensity as they did.

Discuss: Where does overflow come from? What needs to be cultivated in YOUR heart and life before true overflow is possible? What things threaten to hold you back from cultivating overflow?

Week 3

Why do we Overflow?

- It is God's desire for every Christian to have the abundant life... the life that overflows.
 - But why? Why does God want that for us?
- Jesus calls us the light of the world. (Matt 5:14-15)
 - Light is a great metaphor for the abundant life.
 - Light doesn't stay in the lamp.
 - The lamp doesn't try to hoard the light in case it runs out.
 - Light flows from the lamp, touching everything around it.
 - And behind each ray of light is another one.
 - It doesn't stop; it just keeps coming.

Discuss: How is the Christian life like light? Why is it that so many Christians "light a lamp and put it under a bowl"?

- Jesus went on to say: "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matt 5:16)
- The room isn't lit so people will think, "What a beautiful lamp!"
 - Nor is the room lit so that people can go back to what they were doing.
 - The point of lighting the room is that the people will trace the light to its source.
- Our light isn't shining in a place where the lights were just switched off.
 - It's shining into a world that is consumed by darkness.
 - The Bible calls it people "living in darkness" (Matthew 4:16).

- Not temporary, but permanent, all-encompassing darkness.
- When we shine the light of God's love into the darkness, we do it so that the people who see it may "praise your Father in heaven."

Discuss: What aspects of your life serve as a light for God? How do you make sure that your good deeds glorify God and not yourself?

- Overflow isn't about you.
 - It's not about doing great things for God so that people can say even greater things about you.
 - Overflow is about living a life that people look at and say, "I don't know what it is about that person, but they're different."
 - They're so intrigued by you that they will not stop until they discover what it is that sets you apart.

Discuss: How do we keep our motives in check when it comes to Overflow? How do we give God the most glory?

Week 4

How do I Overflow?

- How does a person experience overflow in their life?
- First, it's all about your motives.
 - It's all about your heart.
 - 1 Sam 16:7
 - If your motives have to do with anything other than bringing God glory, you'll never experience overflow.

Discuss: Why is it that you are seeking overflow? What is your ultimate goal in having a life that overflows?

- Once a person's heart is turned towards God, they don't automatically experience overflow.
 - They've got to get rid of anything that would get in the way of the abundant life.
 - This looks different for each individual.
 - For some, television and video games are a form of entertainment; for others, they're a form of idolatry.
 - Our hearts may be turned towards God, but if they're also turned towards other things, we diminish our capacity for overflow.

Discuss: Is your heart turned towards God? If so, are there other things that your heart is turned towards as well? What things do you need to eliminate in your life? What things are preventing you from experiencing overflow?

- When these things happen, he begins to drop dreams into our hearts.
 - Big, crazy dreams!
 - When that happens, it isn't our job to work out all the details.
 - It isn't our job to develop a road map that gets us from here to there.
 - If that were possible, the dream wouldn't be big enough.
 - Instead, it's our job to believe it and pursue it.
 - When he fulfills that dream and replaces it with a bigger one, it's our job to do it all over again,

Discuss: What dreams has God placed in my heart? What is keeping me from pursuing those things with all my heart?