

Week 1: Introduction

Romans 8: 14-17, Luke 15: 11-24

Objective for the Study: To begin the Anchors Series with a focus on the gospel.

Big Picture: When we talk about living an anchored life, it's important that we begin with the foundation of the gospel, grace. As the famous hymn goes, "grace has brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home." As we talk about living lives of *real devotional life*, in *real community with real responsibility*, it's crucial to know that it's all by grace. That is the gospel message. We have been saved from our sins, rescued from the dominion of darkness, transformed from old to new, not because of anything we have done but because of faith in Jesus Christ and His resurrection. Our identity as children of God is secure, because we are His children. We can rest in the saving power of the gospel of grace!

Opening Questions:

1. What is an action point you took away from Monday Night's message? How has it changed you since then?
2. What are three words you would use to describe yourself?

Important to Know: Romans 8 and Luke 15 are fairly familiar passages in the biblical text. Try to work hard to make sure that new believers and seekers feel like they can interact with the text and that students who have "been around the block" see and experience the text afresh.

Text to Read: Romans 8: 14-17

Questions from the Text:

1. Who are children of God and co-heirs with Christ? How do they become this?
2. What are the differences in the position of being a slave and being a co-heir, a son or daughter?
3. J.I. Packer says, "If you want to judge how well someone understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father." Why do you think Packer says that? Why do you agree with the statement?

Text to Read: Luke 15: 11-24

Questions from the Text:

1. Are there any ways in which you can relate to the son from the first half of the story?

2. What did the son do to earn the robe, ring, fattened calf, and party that his father gave him?
3. How do you think it felt to be received like that?

Application Question:

1. What can you do to remind yourself that you're a child of God, and that this adoption was all by grace?
2. Reflect on how this knowledge will change your mindset, schedule, and priorities?

Spiritual Exercise for the Week: Practice silence. Take some time this week to just be. Silent. Maybe only a minute or two, but just sit in silence as a child of God who doesn't have to earn anything, who doesn't have to have a to-do list, but can just sit in silence with his/her Father.

Week 2: Devotional Life

Psalm 53:1-3; ACTS Prayer Plan

Objective for the study: To understand the importance of connecting with God regularly in prayer.

Big Picture: Our first study introduced us to the importance of gospel-centric living. Throughout the next seven weeks, we'll look in-depth at three key elements of the life of a disciple: *real devotional life*, *real community*, and *real responsibility*. Today we'll examine the first of these elements, *real devotional life*.

Opening Questions:

1. Describe a route you regularly travel to get somewhere. What did it take for you to become familiar with that route?
2. Tell about a person you know really well. Why do you know them so well?

Important to Know:

Today we'll discuss the importance of connecting to God through prayer, and why it's important for us to seek God earnestly and regularly. The Hebrew word for "seek" which is used in today's passage from Psalms can mean to "frequent" or to "tread a path." We'll talk about why God desires us to "tread a path" or "frequent" His presence, and give a practical tool to help spend time with God.

Text to Read: Psalm 53:1-3

Questions from the Text:

1. What characterizes a fool?
2. What relationship is there between what a person believes in their heart and how they live?
3. What is God looking for according to verse 2?
4. What does it mean to "seek" God? (See **Important to Know**)
5. What connotations come with the phrase "tread a path"? What happens when you tread the same path over time?
6. How might God feel when a person is behaving as a fool? How might He feel towards those who "tread a path" or "frequent" his presence?
7. Read Hebrews 11:6. How does God reward those who seek him?
8. What might result from spending regular time with God over a long period of time? What kind of path would have tread?

Application Questions:

1. How can you make a routine or habit of “treading a path” or “frequenting” God?
2. Go over the ACTS Prayer Plan. Pray together as a group using this model.

Spiritual Exercise for the Week:

Do the ACTS Prayer Plan each day for a week, at the same time each day. Try to spend 5 minutes in each section. Report back to the group what you learned. Try to maintain the habit for another week, or even a month.

ACTS Prayer Plan

What is prayer? Do you ever struggle to feel that it is more than a laundry list of requests you bring to God? How often do you pray through your list, then sit in awkward silence and wonder what more to say to God? This resource provides a simple structure that can help you gain a more holistic understanding of prayer and how to better form your prayer life.

To begin, try to spend 3 minutes praying according to the pattern modeled by each of the following four sections. Pay attention to which areas are more difficult and which are easier. Over time, it should get easier to spend more time in each section as you develop these habits of prayer.

A Adoration

Have you ever “adored” someone or something? Maybe a person, or a pet, or your favorite video game? To “adore” is to worship and love with great devotion. When we pray, we take time to adore God because of his amazing character and attributes.

- Tell God who he is; praise him for his attributes.
- Pray scriptures out loud which speak of God’s awesome character.
- Some scriptures to read:

Revelation 4:8	Psalm 117
Revelation 4:11	Psalm 99:5

C Confession

Confession is like taking out the garbage. It is a time to be honest before God about the sin that has accumulated in your life, and to ask for his help to overcome that sin. Sin hinders our relationship with God, but when we confess our sins and repent, God gives us grace to change from our habits of sin to habits of righteousness.

- Ask God to show you areas of sin in your life that you need to confess.
- Confess specific sins; don’t just lump your faults together.
- Receive God’s grace and strength to overcome.
- Some scriptures to read:

Psalm 103	Hebrews 4:15-16
Psalm 139:23-24	1 John 1:9

T Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is our expression of gratitude for all God has done for us. It put into perspective God’s goodness and how blessed we truly are!

- Thank God for answered prayers in the following areas:
 - Answered prayers
 - Spiritual, relational, and material blessings
- Some scriptures to read:

Psalm 118, 136, 103:2	pppP	Ps
1 Thessalonians 5:18		

S Supplication

Supplication means asking God for help. It is an expression of our dependence on God’s grace, strength, and divine intervention in our lives. Ask God to move on behalf of your family, the lost, authorities, and your own spiritual life.

- Some scriptures to read:

Philippians 4:6-7	
James 4:2	

Week 3: Real Devotional Life

Exodus 16:1-8, 11-21; John 6:30-35; PROAPT

Objective for the study: To understand the importance of being able to feed ourselves from the Scripture and why a daily feeding is important.

Big Picture: Last week we began the study with a look at the first anchor, *real devotional life*. We discussed the importance of “treading a path” to God, or spending regular time in God’s presence. Today we are going to elaborate on what it means to spend time with God.

Opening Questions:

1. Have you ever felt really hungry? Describe the experience and how you solved the problem of being hungry.
2. Tell about a time you were unexpectedly provided for. What did you need and how did you get it?

Important to Know: In today’s passage, Moses leads the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt but freed by God, toward their Promised Land in Israel. Because of their grumbling attitudes and disobedient hearts, they are forced to wander in the desert for forty years before reaching it. The Israelites complain that they are hungry—they miss the food they had back in Egypt. The Lord’s solution is to miraculously send them bread in the morning and meat at night. Just like the Israelites, we need to be fed daily from the Lord because “man does not live by bread alone.” Like the Israelites, we also have to gather our daily bread to sustain us. This is why it is important to have a daily devotional time in the Scriptures.

Text to Read: Read Exodus 16:1-8

Questions from the Text:

1. What seems to be the basic problem in this passage?
2. What do the Israelites wish for as they grumble (v. 3)? How is this a skewed perspective?
3. What is the Lord’s solution to their problem?
4. What instructions did God give the Israelites concerning the manna? How much were they to gather and how often?
5. What happened when the Israelites disobeyed God in regards to the manna?
6. How far in advance were the Israelites to be concerned with God’s provision?

Text to Read: John 6:30-35

Questions from the Text:

1. According to Jesus, what is the true bread from heaven? Who gives this bread?

2. What promise is given to those who come to Jesus, the Bread of Life? What does it mean that anyone who comes to him will never go hungry?
3. In response to Deuteronomy 8:3, what would it look like to understand that man cannot live by bread alone?

Application Questions:

1. What can you do to gather your daily bread? What are some creative ways to increase your Scripture intake and spend more time with the Lord?
2. The PROAPT handout is a useful tool for studying the scriptures more in depth. Go over the PROAPT handout (5min) then as a group practice the PROAPT on Matthew 4:1-11 (10-15 min). Take time to share your Application points.

Spiritual Exercise for the Week: Challenge yourself to incorporate the PROAPT into your daily life. Use it twice this week in your personal study and share next week how it went. Here it would be good for one of the Core Group Leaders to cast vision for how a *real devotional life* has changed your life or share a moment where you recognized that Scripture was shaping you or encouraging you as you embraced a *real devotional life*.

PROAPT

This is a commonly used tool to help you study the Bible. Instead of just reading a passage, and fishing for something to speak to you, these steps will help you think about the passage more holistically and in context. Use this as a worksheet to fill out as you go. Eventually, you will no longer need to follow such a strict guide because the steps will come more naturally.

Date _____ Today's Passage _____

1. **Pray** (Pray...Preview the text "Here I am Lord; come by your Spirit and teach me; I trust that you will speak.")
2. **Read** (Read the text you will study 1-3 times... slowly)
3. **Observe** (What it says—copy down the verse(s) you feel God is speaking to you by either: affirming you, convicting you, and saying something you don't understand. Also ask— What is it saying about God? What is it saying about me? Who? How? Why?)

Interpret the above material by:

- a. What did it mean to the original recipients
- b. Paraphrasing it
- c. Listing comparisons and contrasts
- d. List all warnings, advice, and promises
- e. Note any "if, then" statements

Now stop and spend some time in quiet reflection

4. **Apply** (What does it mean to "us, now")
 - a. What truth should I believe?
 - b. What am I to do... and how will it affect my actions, attitudes, relationship with God or others?
 - c. How can I do something about this in the next 48 hours?

5. **Pray** (See the ACTS Prayer Plan)

6. **Tell**

What: _____
To Whom: _____
When: _____

Week 4: Real Community

Exodus 17:8–16

Objective for the Study: To demonstrate the power of *real community* and the danger of trying to live the Christian life on our own.

Big Picture: Last week we finished our study of *real devotional life*. This week we are beginning the anchor of *real community*. In *real community*, we live out the life of Christ as one nourished by prayer and the Word. We are called to live in intentional relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we stop short of living in *real community*, our personal devotional time won't bear fruit. Because God is Trinity, and we are made in His image, we most reflect Him when we are doing life with other believers. There is power in *real community*. When we stop relying on ourselves and allow others to journey with us, we experience the benefits of *real community*.

Opening Questions:

1. Can you think of a time that you rejected somebody's help, even when you couldn't do the task alone? What was your reasoning?
2. Where do you see teamwork demonstrated in culture? What is the result of good teamwork?

Important to Know: Tonight we are going to look at a story from the life of Moses. Moses was a strong man of God who was selected by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. In this passage, Israel has already crossed the Red Sea and is journeying through the desert in search of the Promised Land. During their journey, they are attacked by an enemy tribe called the Amalekites. In the battle that ensues, we get a fantastic picture of the power of *real community*. Even as a God-chosen leader, Moses could not do everything on his own! Moses needed the help of Joshua, the army of Israel, and specifically Aaron and Hur to ensure victory during the battle against the Amalekites.

Text to read: Exodus 17:8–16

Questions from the Text:

1. Who did Moses take with him up the hill?
2. What determined the outcome of the battle?
3. Why did Moses need Aaron and Hur?
4. Who fought the battle against the Amalekites? (e.g., God, Moses, the army of Israel, Joshua, Aaron, Hur)
5. How does looking at this passage encourage you to live in *real community*?

Application Questions:

1. In order for Moses to allow Aaron and Hur to help him, his attitude had to be one of vulnerability. In other words, Moses had to let Aaron and Hur help him do what he

couldn't do alone. What areas in your life do you feel you need to be vulnerable with your "Aaron" and "Hur"?

2. How can we practically hold up each other's arms as a Core Group?

Spiritual Exercise: In groups of three, share a challenge you are facing with your "Aaron" and "Hur". Commit to pray for each other daily this week. Discuss other means of help and commit to those as well.

Week 5: Real Community

John 13:1–17; John 13:34-35

Objective for the Study: To learn God's heart and perspective for real community through servanthood.

Big Picture: When we think of *real community*, we often think of interaction with fellow believers on a normal, day-to-day level. However, *real community* also invites the presence of God into every interaction we have with one another. When God is present, we realize the truly magnetic about living in *real community* with one another.

Opening Questions:

3. What is the nicest thing someone has done for you? Why do you think they did it?
4. When you see someone in need, what is your initial response to the situation they are in?

Important to Know: Tonight we are taking a look at the passage of the Last Supper. During their meal together, Jesus does something odd: he gets up and uses his own outer robe to wash the disciples' feet. The roads in Jerusalem were covered in dirt and people wore sandals everywhere they went, so naturally, their feet would get dirty and need to be washed before entering a home. For the disciples during that time, this was customary. Historically, the lowliest of servants would be assigned for this task, but Jesus takes the job. By washing their feet, Jesus demonstrates the love he has for them, and instills in them the mindset/attitude of servanthood. In *real community*, we are called to no less as followers of Jesus.

Text to read: John 13:1–17

Questions from the Text:

6. Why was foot washing necessary in that day in Jerusalem? Who would usually wash feet? (See "Important to Know")
7. What do you think the disciples were thinking when Jesus prepared to wash their feet?
8. If you were in Peter's position, how would you have responded?
9. After washing their feet, what does Jesus command the disciples?
10. What does this say about the heart of God?
11. In our culture, what would be the equivalent of washing one another's feet today? (Ex: *Offering a cup of coffee/tea to a guest in your home; playing a board game; having an "open home" lifestyle [i.e. anyone is welcome to swing by]*)

Application Question:

1. Jesus says in John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." How might you love your housemates, core group members, and friends in a way that honors Jesus?

Spiritual Exercise: Divide a paper into three columns. Above one column write, "For Me." Above the second column write, "For Others." Above the third column write, "For God." Review the past week or month. Jot down in each column the things you have bought and the things you have done for yourself, others, and God. What does this inventory reveal about your life?

Week 7: Real Responsibility

Luke 15:1-7

Objective For the Study: To take a look at the “why” behind practicing *real responsibility* through recognizing God’s heart for the lost.

Big Picture Paragraph: We have now spent over half the semester looking at the first two anchors of Chi Alpha. We now take a turn to look at *real responsibility*. *Real responsibility* means recognizing the situations of people around you: your friends, the less fortunate, and the global world. It means investing in the lives and livelihoods of others, and inviting them not only into our own lives, but also into a Christian walk of their own. Sometimes, we lack vision for why we should reach out to the lost people in our lives. By better understanding God’s heart for the lost, we can better understand why *real responsibility* should be not just the task, but the **joy**, of every Christian.

Opening Questions:

1. Have you ever lost something of value? What was the experience like?
2. Have you ever seen someone you love deep in despair? What about in the heights of joy? What do you experience during those times?

Important to Know: Today we are reading the parable of the Shepherd with the lost sheep. Keep in mind that Jesus is telling the story in response to the Pharisee’s grumbling and confusion over why Jesus befriends and spends time with sinners. This parable is Jesus’ answer to their question: It matters to His Father, the one to whom they are lost! Consider that the story is told from the Shepherd’s perspective and not the sheep’s. Indeed, the sheep may not have even known he was lost! Instead, the heart of the parable is in the experience of the Shepherd through concern over losing a member of His flock, and His joy upon rescuing the sheep. Jesus tells us that He seeks after and saves the lost for two reasons: 1) When they are lost, His father’s heart is grieved. 2) When they are recovered, His Father’s heart is gladdened.

So, if evangelism is about lessening God’s sorrow, and bringing celebration to His heart, then we are called to reach out to ALL of His lost children- not just the one’s we like, or the easily accessible, or those we think earned relationship with God. He wants to be reunited with every single man, woman, and child, whatever their situation, personality, or history. Will you care for the things your Father’s heart cares for and join in this mission?

Text to Read: Luke 15:1-7

Questions from the text:

1. Why do you think the Pharisees were grumbling at Jesus?
2. Why does Jesus tell this parable? What question is he attempting to answer?
3. Who is the main character of the story? What actions are involved in this story?
4. Who do you think suffered most in the parable of the Shepherd and the lost sheep?
 - a. Do you think the sheep knew it was lost?
 - b. Are there any qualifications that make the sheep worthy of being rescued?

5. What does Jesus say is the real world comparison to a Shepherd who loses a sheep?
6. What does this tell you about how God views lost people today?

Application Questions:

1. If we love and serve God, what should our response be to God's view of the lost, today?
2. Chi Alpha has a commitment to "Invest & Invite". What do you think this means in our daily lives? What could you practically do to invest and invite in your relationships with the lost around you (ex. classes, hallway, family, a friend, co-workers, etc.)?

Spiritual Exercise for the Week:

It is important to note that the next three weeks on real responsibility will have heavier applications and spiritual exercises. Please note the tone and tenor of your Core Group over the next few weeks and make sure they don't feel overwhelmed.

Set two goals this week:

- 1) Invest: What is a relationship you can invest in this week? Come up with one concrete way you will invest in that person. Then DO IT!
- 2) Invite: What is an event or activity you can invite a friend who does not yet know Jesus to, this week?

Week 8: Real Responsibility

Isaiah 58: 1-12

Objective for the study: To understand that *real responsibility* calls us to care for those less fortunate.

Big Picture Paragraph: Last week we examined why *real responsibility* should be the beating heart of every Christian. We desire to lessen God's sorrow, and to bring joy to His heart at the recovery of His lost ones: thus we "Invest & Invite" people into our lives, and into the Christian walk! But *real responsibility* calls us beyond just reaching the lost ones we interact with in our daily lives. This week we'll look at how *real responsibility* calls us to reach out to, and care for those less fortunate than us.

Opening Questions:

1. Check in: How are the other anchors of *real devotional life* and *real community* looking in your life right now?
2. Do you remember a time when someone helped you out or gave you something that you could not give yourself?

Important to Know: In our passage tonight, we read about a time where the Israelites had gotten off track (again). They were fasting and partaking in other "religious" acts, but weren't living out the heart of God in the world as His people. What are religious acts like fasting or sacrifice worth if the overflowing acts of the heart are callous and uncaring? This is what we now call legalism- doing something purely because it's the rule and not because your heart is right. The Lord corrects the Israelite's meaningless ways of showing their godliness, and tells them what "true fasting", or true relationship with God, looks like put into action. It is to feed the hungry, break the chains of injustice, and to care for those in less fortunate positions. When we take *real responsibility* for those less fortunate we take part in God's plan that we, as the church, should be the hope of the world.

Text to Read: Isaiah 58

Questions from that Text:

1. Who is speaking in the passage? Who does the Lord speak to/through?
2. What were the Israelites doing wrong and what were they doing right?
3. What kind of fast has the Lord chosen? What does He explicitly say (v6-7)?
4. What do all of these groups in v6-7 have in common? Do you think the list covers all the people God wants us to reach out to?
5. Verse 7 says a curious phrase: "your own flesh and blood". What do you think this phrase means? What do we have in common with the people groups of v6-7?
6. Take a moment to examine how you feel around these people in your heart; do you always feel as if they are your equal?

7. If this is what is required of you (*to spend yourself*), who will take care of your needs? Carefully look at the text; whom does it say will be your rear guard as you care for others (v8)?
8. Reflect on the phrase in v12: "Repairer of Broken Walls and the Restorer of Streets with Dwellings". What would it mean to be this in our modern world? What are broken boundary walls you want to see restored? Empty places you want filled with life again?

Application Questions:

1. Which group of people from the biblical theme of the less fortunate really stick out to you? The orphans, the widows, or the hungry? Is there a group of people or a disenfranchised population that tugs on your heart? Why?
2. What can you do for these people this week?... this semester?... during your time in Charlottesville? Who are the disenfranchised you can take *real responsibility* for right now as a college student? How?

Spiritual Exercise for the Week: Talk about a way in which your Core Group can take *real responsibility* for those less fortunate. Plan a night where you feed the homeless, volunteer at a day-haven or nursing home, or work with underprivileged children. Then go and do it.

Week 9: Real Responsibility

Romans 10:11–15

Objective for the study: To understand that *real responsibility* is bigger than just Charlottesville. That God’s heart is for the whole world.

Big Picture: We have seen how *real responsibility* calls us to care for the spiritual lives of those we are in relationships with (Investing and Inviting!), and to care for those less fortunate than us. But what does *real responsibility* have to say about the rest of the world? Are there other roles that can be played in having a heart for the globe, beyond short-term mission trips?

Opening Questions:

1. Have you ever traveled outside of the United States? What was your favorite place to visit?
2. What’s your best travel story? (*near death experience, crazy travel story*)

Important to Know: Tonight, this study is going to look at a passage of Scripture to get a bigger picture of how we can take *real responsibility* in the area of missions. We find that God’s desire to be glorified and exalted by every tongue, tribe, and nation is expressed regularly throughout Scripture, and that He expects the Church, by His Spirit, to make it happen!

In the Old Testament, the command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28, Genesis 9:1) is given to God’s people as the means of spreading His glorious image to every corner of the world. In Genesis 12, God tells a man named Abram to leave his country and go to a new land, promising him that “all peoples on earth will be blessed” through Abram and his descendants because of his obedience.

The New Testament further reveals that God’s gift of salvation and eternal life is for *all* people (John 3:16). Matthew 28:18-20 is known as the “Great Commission”: the call to spread this message to every people group across the globe. The Church is God’s plan in achieving the evangelization of the world, and the reuniting of the lost to their Father in heaven.

With your group it will be important to challenge each person to understand his/her role in the mission of global evangelization. The ideas of “**Pray. Give. Go. Welcome.**” are taken from the mission statement of Chi Alpha Expeditions.

Text to Read: Romans 10:11–15

Questions from the Text:

1. What seems to be Paul’s main point in this passage? Does this point come across as a more of a mandate or an option?
2. How is it possible that all would hear? What would it take for this to happen?
3. What do you think it means to be “sent”? Do you think this message is to a specific few, or every person who follows God? Where do you see this in Scripture? (*Ex. Isaiah 6:8, Isaiah volunteers to go. 2 Corinthians 5:20; we are ambassadors of Christ. Colossians 1:28 “He is the one we proclaim... teaching everyone with all wisdom.”*).
4. Take a moment to read the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). How do we practically live this out to the ends of the earth?

5. The Chi Alpha Expeditions' mission statement is "Pray. Give. Go. Welcome." How do you think each of these ideas tie into global missions?
6. What would global missions look like if one of these components were missing?
7. What do you think "Welcome" includes? In your current life season as a college student, how can you live this out?
 - a. Particularly, how does the idea of welcoming international students impact your view of global missions here in Charlottesville?

Application Questions:

1. Of the different components, which one feels like the biggest stretch to you? What are some practical things you could do to grow in this area?
2. Which of the different components seems the easiest for you? How are you practically living that component out?

Spiritual Exercise for the Week: Choose one of these three options to complete as a group.

1. Pool your money, or have a fundraiser, to send a financial gift to a missionary.
2. Attend an XA international student outreach event (talk to staff to see what's happening!), or a University program like "language buddies".
3. Each adopt a country for the week in prayer, praying at least 10 minutes a day. Print out and carry the flag of your adopted country as a reminder of the lost.