

## **FORGE: A 12-Week Experience in Christian Growth**

### **What is FORGE ?**

**FORGE** is a 12-week discipleship experience, designed to help individuals **engage** intentionally in their own developing story of redemption and **pursue** more actively the peace and freedom that comes through relationship with Jesus.

### **What experiential elements does FORGE include?**

The **FORGE** experience includes the following program elements:

- 12 weekly group meetings, each of which will include
  - A time of turning to God in worship
  - Live teaching on the topic for the week
  - A group contemplative exercise
  - Structured small group discussion and prayer on the topic for the week
- Weekly Scripture reading assignments on the topic for that session
- 3 one-on-one soul care sessions (1 hour each) with a trained group leader

### **What topics are covered in the FORGE experience?**

**FORGE** covers the following growth topics in the weekly teaching sessions and small group discussions:

**Week 1 - What am I looking for, and why am I here?** *In this first lesson, we examine the work that Jesus is doing in our individual stories. We explore the movements of our hearts that have caused us to acknowledge our need to seek more of Him in order to find the kind of life we are looking for.*

**Week 2 - What did God have in mind when He made me?** *In this second lesson, we dive into God's design for human nature and human relationship. We are all, men and women, image bearers of our Creator, so we examine the aspects of God's nature and character that He infused in us as men and as women. We also consider how God anticipated men and women would operate in relationships and in community with each other.*

**Week 3 - How did I become such a mess?** *Using the metaphor of constructing a house, we consider God’s design for building the “house” of our individual selves, including who our builders have been and what building materials they use. We explore how we try to complete our own houses in unhealthy ways when the right materials for construction are lacking and when our builders fail in their tasks.*

**Week 4 - Does God even care?** *In this lesson, we unpack what God says about Himself and His relationship with each one of us. We engage with Jesus’s own words about how He and the Father love us and about how They see us and treasure who They designed and intended us to be.*

**Week 5 - Can Jesus really fix me?** *In this fourth week, we expose the enemy’s strategy of using lies about God and lies about ourselves to keep us in bondage. We express and embrace the truths that God and Jesus speak about us. Conversely, we identify and reject the lies that have kept us from realizing and walking out the goodness of God’s image created in each of us.*

**Week 6 - What good is the Cross to me?** *Our rescue hinges on the application of the Cross of Jesus in our stories. This lesson explains how Christ’s death on the cross gives us a way to unburden ourselves of the weight of our own sins and the sins that have been committed against us. We learn how confession, forgiveness and the Cross of Jesus introduce true freedom into our stories.*

**Week 7 - What have I been worshipping?** *In this lesson, we examine idolatry: what are the things in our lives and in our stories that we put ahead of God and ahead of our relationship with God? We learn to identify and begin to release our idols.*

**Week 8 - What does God expect of me?** *In week seven, we take on the issue of the rules. Is our walk of faith just about following the rules? It is not, and in this lesson we address how relationship with Jesus works and what it looks like. We discuss the ways that our relationship with Jesus impacts, in concrete and practical ways, the development of our stories from this point forward.*

**Week 9 - What do I do about temptation?** *In this lesson, we define and explore temptation: what it is and how we respond to it successfully.*

**Week 10 - How do I make different choices?** *This lesson on choices is not about following the rules. Instead, we examine how discernment works. . .how we involve God in the choices we face in our lives, both big choices and little choices. We learn how to begin making good choices by engaging the Holy Spirit in our process of identifying options and then in our final choosing of the option to pursue.*

**Week 11 - Why can't I go it alone?** *In week eleven, we examine the role of relationships, the church and community in our stories of growth and healing with Jesus. Jesus uses other people and His Church in very powerful ways in our lives, and we talk through how we make ourselves available to those ways in order to gain the greatest blessing that He and the Father have for us.*

**Week 12 - What are my next steps?** *In our final gathering, we acknowledge that the journey with Jesus is all about the process; it is not a destination. We talk about how we embrace the process and what next steps in our stories with Jesus might look like.*

### **Why does FORGE include one-on-one sessions?**

We believe the one-on-one sessions distinguish **FORGE** as a truly unique growth experience for the participants. Men and women in the church have few opportunities to sit in a safe, one-on-one setting where they can receive care and support in their efforts to identify God's hand in their lives and to recognize God's voice in the movement of their hearts and stories. The content of the lessons in **FORGE** and the sharing time in the small group are great catalysts for effective and empowering growth. The one-on-one sessions give each of the participants the opportunity to talk about how God is (or is not) working in the spaces and the places in their stories that might be too sensitive to expose in the small group setting.

### **How does FORGE support our journey of discipleship?**

We believe **FORGE** is an ideal next step for men and women seeking to move beyond the woundings and brokenness that have colored their choices and their stories. We find that many believers who have engaged in discipleship programs understand they have been wounded, but they still need help with next steps in their journey toward wellness and freedom with Jesus. We hear often, "I've opened up all my stuff; now what do I do with it?"

In **FORGE**, we help participants learn to engage more deeply and more intentionally in relationship with Jesus, so they are able to apply the principles of Scripture to make real and lasting change in their own stories, in order to live the fullness of life promised by Jesus.