



Session 1: Whole lyfe introduction



Stepping into the Whole lyfe stream...

The Whole lyfe stream is about making the invisible presence of God visible in everyday life. God manifests himself in his creation, even in the midst of mundane activities, whenever and wherever we invite him. Jesus became human and entered our world. In family, work and society we learn to live our life as Jesus would live our life in our place. There is no divide between worship and work; all activity is of equal value to God.

This stream stresses the value of family, the home, work and the contribution we can bring to society as a whole. You'll find discussions and challenges to bring life and faith together and to help you see God in everything you do.

Previous session review

- Recap on your experience of the previous challenge. How did it go? Was it helpful?
- If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question: Where and how did you experience God last week?

Read

Read the passage several times through, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

As you read, look out for shockers and blockers.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Setting the scene:

- The Sabbath began at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday. It was a weekly day of rest and worship.
- In this passage, Jesus is the guest speaker in the synagogue. Usually men and woman worshipped in different parts of the synagogue. So a woman appearing amongst the men would have been an unusual event.
- 'You are free...' - literally 'untied' from your sickness. Jesus makes the point that everyone who owned an ox or an ass would have untied their animals to lead them to water on the Sabbath, but they objected to him 'untying' this woman because they considered him to be working on the Sabbath.
- A group called the Pharisees were trying to give guidelines on how to worship God in everyday life, but sometimes these laws became a burden for the Jewish community, rather than the blessing God intended it to be.

Luke 13.10–17

One Sabbath Jesus was teaching in a synagogue. A woman there had an evil spirit that had kept her sick for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called out to her, "Woman, you are free from your sickness!" He placed his hands on her, and at once she straightened herself up and praised God.

The official of the synagogue was angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, so he spoke up and said to the people, "There are six days in which we should work; so come during those days and be healed, but not on the Sabbath!"

The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Any one of you would untie your ox or your donkey from the stall and take it out to give it water on the Sabbath. Now here is this descendant of Abraham whom Satan has kept in bonds for eighteen years; should she not be released on the Sabbath?" His answer made his enemies ashamed of themselves, while the people rejoiced over all the wonderful things that he did.

Reflect

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your shockers and blockers. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. Do you think that God is interested in every part of our lives – or only the ‘religious’ parts?

Q2. How can we begin to consider all of our work (paid or unpaid) as a ‘vocation’ or ‘calling from God?’

‘We cannot retreat from the “secular” world in the hopes of finding God elsewhere. Indeed, the very presence of God is manifest in the smallest, most mundane of daily activities.’

*Richard J Foster,
Streams of Living Water*

Respond

Whole lyfe challenge: As a group, create a challenge that will help you increase the connection between God and all areas of your life this week or choose from the following:

Challenge ideas:

1. Count your blessings

This week, write a list of all the things for which you’re grateful to God. Add to the list every day and include all areas of your life – family, work, sport, food, sleep etc. You may like to do this as a family, adding to the list each time you eat together.

2. That’s entertainment

It can be easy to write off music as empty entertainment. Try spending some time this week listening attentively and looking out for deeper meanings. Many songs communicate the artist’s deep longings and the search for love, life and even God – whether they’re explicitly ‘Christian’ or not. In the car, the shops, at home – wherever, pay attention to the music that you hear. Be open to the possibility that God may want to communicate this way to you.

3. One day

Pick one day this week where you choose to consciously honour God and invite him into every part of your day. Invite him into your day the moment you wake up, into your commute, your daily tasks and conversations. Ask God for wisdom in challenging interactions or decisions. Try to do your work as though Jesus was doing it himself in your place. As best as you can, keep company with Jesus throughout the day. Before you go to sleep, take time to stop and reflect.

Group Prayer

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group as you increase your awareness of God and your relationship with him in all areas of life this week.