

BETA VERSION 1

STARTING POINT YOUR GPS 4 LIFE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



Dear Facilitator:

Thank you for taking on the role of facilitator. You are about to have a lot of fun with your group and experience the closeness that naturally develops in a Connect Group. Our Senior Pastor, Rev In Jin Moon, thanks you for the important contribution you are making. People enjoy exploring their lives and being involved in discussions about things that matter.

Feel free to contact the Ministry Support Team at Lovin' Life at: support@lovinlifeministries.org with questions or concerns. We are here to support your success! Enjoy your group!

Best Wishes,
The Ministry Support Team

MATERIALS

Plain paper plates and pens (1 per participant) and small post-it notes (30-50 each). Before the class, take a marking pen and draw on it to look like Figure 1 (page 7).

SERIES INTRODUCTION

You are encouraged to read the guidance on group facilitation prior to your first meeting.

Welcome

Have participants introduce themselves. (Name and where they live, work, or go to school.)
Welcome to the 100 series, your Starting Point to a heart for God.

Explain to participants where Starting Point fits into their journey to membership.



What is a Heart for God?

A heart for God is the heart of a child. A heart for God is like that of a child who identifies with, depends upon and is consumed by love for his or her parents. A heart for God feels this way toward our Heavenly Parent. It is not childish or immature, but resembles the wonderful traits of children: openness, curiosity, innocence, willingness to trust and eagerness to explore and grow.

A heart for God means you think about **God**, you live a **Principled** life and utilize **Spiritual Practice** in a meaningful way, and you do these things because you want to. You enjoy it; it feels right, and you are growing spiritually.

How can you develop a Heart for God? By experiencing God.

Imagine you'd never tasted ice cream. One day you taste it for the first time. All your senses explode! Likewise, the first time you experience God your heart comes alive. Our series, Starting Point, is all about supporting your journey with God so that you can experience God more fully in your life.

Your GPS 4 Life helps you experience God.

Everyone is familiar with a GPS (Global Positioning System). It can locate your exact position anywhere in the world. If you enter your destination it will calculate a route. You can choose the most direct route, a scenic route or whether you will use a highway. This series is introducing you to your inner GPS. It helps you identify where you are at. If you decide on your destination it can help you determine the way to get there. GPS in this context stands for God, Principle and Spiritual Practices.

God is inside of you, full of hope and love for you. **Principle** is the route to your destination, and **Spiritual Practices** are the motor that moves you forward.

This series will introduce you to a number of spiritual practices that will help you experience God and give you a GPS 4 Life to assist you on your faith journey.

Our ten weekly sessions will cover:

- spiritual growth
- having your eyes and ears open to God
- owning personal sacred time and space
- the ability to empower through focused study
- getting the most out of Sunday service
- a lifestyle of purity and service
- finding friends of faith
- today's subject, making a priority shift.

Here's what happens each week

LOOKING BACK

will review what happened during the previous week.

YOU ARE HERE

will be a chance to gauge where you're at, your starting point.

DESTINATION

will be an explanation of how the Principle works and a spiritual practice.

GPS 4 LIFE

will discuss how God, Principle and Spiritual Practices get you to that destination. Your GPS means you think about **God**, you live a **Principled life** and utilize **Spiritual Practice** in a meaningful way, and you do these things because you want to. You enjoy it, it feels right, and you are growing spiritually.

STEPS FORWARD

implements a spiritual practice that week, or a purpose or value.

FOR NEXT WEEK

includes "Put into Practice" and provides supplementary readings "To Learn More."

THE GROUND RULES

Successful groups are those in which each person makes a commitment to some ground rules. Brainstorm with the group to establish ground rules. We recommend that you include the following points. Your group may include other points as well.

Attendance:

What if you can't make it:

Listening and speaking:

Confidentiality:

Having an accountability partner:

Is there anything else you'd like to add to this list?

Ask the class, once they create the ground rules,
Can we all agree to these ground rules?

SESSION ONE: **PRIORITY SHIFT**

What are your priorities?

The priorities you set, the choices you make, determine the direction of your life. Work, relationships, hobbies, health, even volunteering and ironically church life can crowd out God. It's good to lay your priorities out and look at them every now and then to see what's happening in your life. That is the objective for our first "You Are Here."



Seeing my life

Purpose of this activity

To help people identify the day to day activities of their lives, examine where they invest the most energy, what areas of their lives are jammed packed or perhaps neglected. The participants will get an opportunity to examine their lives in relation to the question, "How much room is there for God in my life?"

Facilitator Instruction

Give each person a paper plate that you have prepared to resemble Figure 1. Have everyone look at it. Ask the group to offer up a few words as to what each of the terms mean to them. Make sure that everyone is clear about what these areas represent. Distribute about 30 small post-it notes to each participant.

Write all the things you do on a regular basis and stick it on the appropriate section of the plate. This is about your actions. For example under Health you might have “workout” written on one post-it note and on another post-it you might have “eat low fat foods.” Under learning you might have Individual post-its for each class you take or perhaps a novel you are reading. Relationships can include all the things you do to take care of friends and family. The idea is to be able to see exactly how your life fills up. The things you do each and every day, week or month are laid out for you to see. I’ll give you 5-10 minutes to do this.

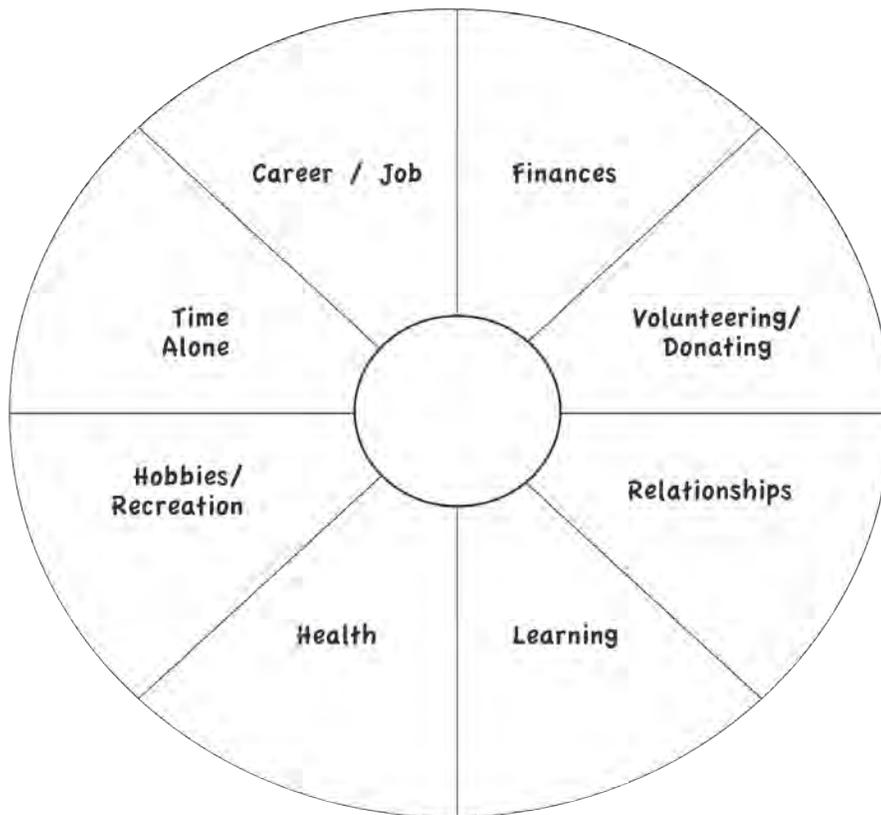


Figure 1.

DISCUSSION

What you’ve just done on your plate gives you a visual sense of what your priorities look like right now. Is your plate balanced? Is it over-crowded? Would anyone like to share an observation, or how you feel about your priorities?

Our lives reflect what is important to us. If health is important, we may see a lot of post-it notes in that area. The same applies to learning or any other area.

- Where does God fit in?
- Is there even room for God in my life or am I too busy?
- Do I need to make a priority shift?

(Allow the participants some time for discussion.)



The Bible is a great resource for experiences of real people and their priorities. We'll look at the story of two sisters, Mary and Martha.

Mary and Martha

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’ ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’”

(Luke 10: 38-42 NIV)



What were the contrasting priorities for the two sisters?

(Mary: Listening to Jesus at his feet; Martha: housekeeping and preparations to serve Jesus)

What was Martha’s state of mind?

(Distraction, envy, worry, distress)

What does her response to Mary tell us about her priorities?

(She felt that serving was more important than being with, that her sister should have shared her priorities, and that she was judging her sister.)

What was Mary's state of mind?

(She focused on Jesus' priority, which was to be together and share his heart.)

How did Jesus respond to both Mary and Martha?

(It's good to serve, but she was unhappy about doing so. So she wasn't comfortable with the priority she set for herself. And she thought her sister should have had the same priority as her.)

Are there times when I am more like Mary or like Martha?

(get audience responses)

Which priority did Jesus recommend?

(Spending time with Jesus)

Do my priorities get me upset or distracted sometimes?



Before you busy yourself with external duties and functions, make sure you're leaving time in your life for God.



Study passage:

In this passage from a book by the Unification Church International President, Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, we consider the question of integrating God as your first priority with all your other priorities. (Answer: having God as your first priority turns each area into a way to offer yourself to others. This adds meaning and value to all the areas of your life.)

“It is my belief that the seemingly incompatible sides of life, namely the path of a monk and that of a family man / woman, must be integrated.

“The key to doing so is in expanding the definition of ‘religious’ life and ‘spiritual practices.’

“Many of us may do ‘religious’ church work or do ‘spiritual practice,’ but view time with our families or with our spouse as ‘worldly’ or ‘mundane.’ THIS IS THE PROBLEM! We have effectively taken ‘the sacred’ and ‘the religious’ out of our homes and relegated it to only ‘church’ work.

“From a Unificationist perspective this is inconsistent, because forming healthy families and uniting our mind and body are the key to how we believe we can create a world of peace, harmony and unity. We must *not* divide the sacred from *any* aspect of our lives.”
(*Cheon Hwa Dang*, 8-9)



What would it mean to include God in all aspects of your daily life? Would that make you experience or see things differently?

How would you deal with that?

Here is a practical example of bringing God into your everyday life.

“When you work, you must love that business, love the products you work with, and, of course, love the people. Always give honor to other people. God created us, but we are also shaping ourselves and restoring our original value. Make your company a dwelling of God. Don’t just feel like a worker or supervisor. Invest your heart in your work. Determine to make it a business that serves all people. Then wherever your business goes, it becomes God’s ‘love extension.’” (*How to Gain Spiritual Help* 11/27/1978)

Your Priority Shift

Look at the variety of things you are doing arrayed on your paper plate. The center is not labeled. But the center is the most important part. Your priorities start from inside, from the center. Putting God in the center changes our perspective on our life experience, our relationships with others and our view of ourselves. Now we see the world differently.

Write “God” in the circle at the middle of the plate, and draw an arrow from the middle into each of the eight areas.



DISCUSSION

What small steps might you take to shift your priority to God?

How would connecting God to each part of your life make a difference?

We create a life we love through the process of inviting our Heavenly Parent into every aspect of our lives.



FOR NEXT WEEK

ROOM FOR GOD

It's outside of this meeting time that you can really step forward in your personal journey with God.

To support your journey toward your destination, Your **GPS 4 Life** includes two weekly activities:

“Put into Practice” and “To Learn More.”

Put into Practice

For this week's Put into Practice, look at your plate and consider what changes you might make based on today's discoveries. Take a moment to write these down.

Now share with your accountability partner what you are going to challenge this week.

An effective spiritual practice is adopting an Accountability Partner. This is someone who promises to keep in touch with you once or twice during the week to check in to see how it's going and check on your progress.

Accountability Partners

Introduce the idea of adopting accountability partners. You can assign or they can choose a partner. Allow anyone to opt out if they don't feel comfortable. (Put the names of each group member in a bowl. Now allow pairs to pick a name each. The person they pick is their partner.) You may choose to change accountability partners during the course of Starting Point.

To Learn More

Recommended readings are provided to help you reflect and give you additional insight on making a Priority Shift in your life.

Let's close this session in prayer

To Learn More

Why have a heart for God?

Being loved by God and knowing God's Love is the starting point of finding yourself.
(*A Prophet Speaks Today*)

Because of the human fall, we have not seen God in the true sense. We have not had the true God, in a way. We have not been living with the true God. If we as mankind could have been one with God, with God as our Father, abiding in Him, living with Him in the greatest love, how happy we would have been! And on God's part, how happy He would have been to live with His true children. He, being the Highest in every sense, could have been overjoyed, with unimaginable happiness. He would have lived with us in the ultimate love. Have you ever stopped to imagine how He would have smiled and danced and been delighted to see us? It is our great loss not to have been able to live with such a Father, from whom everything good and happy starts. But we have never experienced such a sensation to the fullest degree.

We experience the love of parents over us. Our parents kiss us on the cheek, embrace us and console us in times of sadness. We have experienced these things but not to the full extent, and not in the true sense, because every sensation can come in its fullest degree only from God. What we have experienced in the world apart from God is not from God, but tainted by Satan. (*Children of the Heavenly Father* 1973)

Then, what kind of relationship would you like to have with God? Would you be content to just be His servant? Or would you prefer to be His friend? Would you rather be His adopted son, or would you like to find a way to become God's own child? I know you will be satisfied with nothing short of the ultimate position as sons and daughters of God.

God's ultimate purpose in His creation of man is to give to him all His love, all His life, and all His ideal. You are to occupy the entire love of God, to the depth of His heart. By becoming His true sons and daughters, your desire will be fulfilled. That is your ultimate destiny. Then you will be saturated with the love of God. You will be filled with joy and feel overwhelmed by a total satisfaction in life.

Early in my life God called me for a mission as His instrument. I was called to reveal His truth for Him, as His prophet. I committed myself unyieldingly in pursuit of truth, searching the hills and valleys of the spiritual world. The time suddenly came to me

when heaven opened up, and I was privileged to communicate with Jesus Christ and the living God directly. Since then I have received many astonishing revelations. God Himself told me that the most basic and central truth of the universe is that God is our parent and we are His children. We are all created as children of God. And He said there is nothing closer, nothing deeper, nothing more ultimate than when parent and child are one: One in love, one in life, and one in ideal. (*God's Hope for Man* 10/20/1973)

The relationship which is primary is parent-child. But, sometimes you want to make God your friend; sometimes you must feel like having Him as your brother. In absolute love, He can be anything to you. (*A Prophet Speaks Today*)

God as our priority

“The people of God came [to America] to mold a new way of life. Their principal Partner was God. At home, in caring for their children, in farming or cooking or building, they let God share their work. He was the only security they had. A farmer might talk to his son working out in the field with him, ‘Let’s plow this field in the name of God.’ Their everyday life was lives in the name of God.

“After the first spring visited them, they cleared the fields, planted, cultivated, and harvested the crop. And they attributed all their precious harvest to the grace of God. The beautiful tradition of Thanksgiving thus originated. Following the next severe winter, the first thing they built was a church. The first road they built was the road to the church. At night, at dawn, in the morning and at noontime, they prayed to God. I am sure they prayed, ‘God, we want to build a place where You can dwell and be master... I can visualize early America as a beautiful America, because God was dwelling everywhere. In the school, in the church, in the kitchen, in the street--in any assembly or market place, God was dwelling.” (*New Hope—Christianity in Crisis*, 55-56)

Bringing God into our everyday life

When you work, you must love that business, love the products you work with, and, of course, love the people. Always give honor to other people. God created us, but we are also shaping ourselves and restoring our original value. Make your company a dwelling of God. Don’t just feel like a worker or supervisor. Invest your heart in your work. Determine to make it a business that serves all people. Then wherever your business goes, it becomes God’s “love extension.” (*How to Gain Spiritual Help* 11/27/1978)

Transforming Our Lives

“What the Bible is actually saying is, ‘Get yourselves unstuck from the habitualized way of thinking, living, and expressing yourselves to each other – and be transformed.’ This speaks to all of us: me, you, everyone. We are not to wait for God to do the job for us, not to wait for a band of angels to sing good wishes to us. We need to be our own transformation by renewing our minds.

Transformation is a wonderful word meaning growth and movement in our lives from one state to another. How do we do that? Simply by changing the way we think – by renewing, renovating, and overhauling the way we think and the way we have gone about doing things.

Renewing our thinking means deciding that we are going to be healthy, independent children who love and honor God and want to do something great. We want to build something wonderful by changing and renovating our thinking and by being constantly on the lookout for different and new ways to transform, to create real beauty. And in doing so we will prove the will of God.”

(Rev. In Jin Moon, *LLM Sermon* July 3, 2011)

Developing A Heart for God

You should be able to cry out “Father!” even in your sleep and even when you are by yourself. When in your daily life you forget to eat or sleep, and exclaim “Father!” with a deep longing, you will be able to hold His hand. Magical things will happen. When you call out “Father!” He will embrace you.

You must know that in your life of faith, the most precious thing is how you tap into those feelings that bring you those deep experiences. The degree and amount of your experience and feeling can be the measure of your faith. If you have such a heart of love, when you determine, “I must accomplish this,” God will already be supporting you even before you ask, “Heavenly Father, please be with me.” Feeling His support, you will say, “Thank you, God!” (*Cheong Seong Gyeong Book 1* p 54)

For Group Facilitators: Session 1 Evaluation Form

The 100 series is a work in progress. We appreciate your use of this curriculum and would like to get your feedback on how effective it was in supporting new members' spiritual journey. We would like to receive a week-by-week evaluation of your experience as a facilitator. Please rate the main elements, from weak (1) to strong (5). Scan and e-mail completed form to icompton@unification.org or print and fax it to: 212 997 0051.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments, Suggestions
The overall structure, flow and length						
The "GPS" acronym and its explanation						
Introduction, definition of a heart for God						
The paper plate exercise						
Mary and Martha story and related questions						

Did the questions stimulate good discussion?							
The “put into practice” assignment							
Quality of guidance for facilitator							
Useful for guiding new members to develop a life of faith							
Please comment on the participants’ experience:							
What worked about the session?							
What didn’t work about the session?							
Other comments and suggestions.							

THANK YOU!