

Protection

Lesson 02 of the series, "Make the Connection"

I. Our souls common enemies.

a. The world.

"Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever." (1 John 2:15-17 NLT)

"When the world hates you, remember it hated me before it hated you. The world would love you if you belonged to it, but you don't. I chose you to come out of the world, and so it hates you."

(John 15:18-19 NLT)

b. The flesh.

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

(Mark 14:38 NKJV)

"The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict." (Galatians 5:17 NLT)

c. The devil.

"Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."

(Ephesians 6:11-12 NLT)

"Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14 NLT)

"You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God."

(Ephesians 2:2 NLT)

II. Our fellowship is being organized into **Connect Groups** to provide for the common defense.

"Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labor. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble. And on a cold night, two under the same blanket can gain warmth from each other. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT)

In Connect Groups we can:

- encourage each other. (Hebrews 3:13)
- speak truth to each other. (Psalm 141:5)
- hold each other accountable. (Proverbs 27:17)
- pray for each other meaningfully. (Ephesians 6:18)
- restore each other when we blow it. (Galatians 6:1)

"Centerpoint is a church of small groups, not a church with small groups."

III. I must decide which has the greater risk/reward: joining a Connect Group or going it alone.

“Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.” (1 Peter 5:9 NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Do you agree that we all face the common enemies of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Why/why not?
2. Read 1 John 2:15-17. What does it mean to love the world? What does it mean to be hated by the world? How does the world feel about you?
3. Frank is traveling by himself on a business trip. After he checks into his hotel room he notices that he can rent adult videos from the hotel without the charge appearing on his bill. It would be easy for him to watch an X-rated movie without anyone knowing about it. Does it mean Frank isn't a committed Christian if he wrestles with his decision? Why/Why not? How could people in his Connect Group help him in this situation? (Read Proverbs 27:17)
4. Read Ephesians 6:11-12. You meet a friend for lunch and during your conversation your friend mentions that she has been seeing a psychic through whom she has been able to communicate with her deceased mother. How do you respond?
5. Psalm 41:5. Is accountability important to the Christian life? Why/Why not? Who holds your accountable?
6. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. React to the statement “Centerpoint is a church of small groups not a church with small groups.” What is the difference?
7. Read 1 Peter 5:9. What's the risk of going it alone?

Resources:

The Master Plan of Evangelism

By: [Robert E. Coleman](#)

Baker / 1994 /

Lifestyle Discipleship: The Challenge of Following

By: [Jim Petersen](#)

Nav Press / 1993

Groups: The Life-Giving Power of Community, Pursuing Spiritual Transformation

By: [John Ortberg](#), [Laurie Pederson](#), [Judson Poling](#)

Zondervan Corp. / 2000

Creating Community: 5 Keys to Building a Small-Group Culture

By: [Andy Stanley](#), [Bill Willits](#)

Multnomah Pub. Inc. / 2005

Sticky Church

By: Larry Osborne

Zondervan / 2008

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