



DATE(S)

January 27-28, 2023

SERIES AND LESSON TITLE

Get Smart – Week 4

TAKE-HOME POINT (THP)

God wants us to be open!

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

**Proverbs 17:17, James 4:8a,
Proverbs 23:12, Jeremiah 29:12-
13, 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Give any Campus-Specific Announcements

OPENING GAME / GROUP TIME

LARGE-GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

No game this week due to baptism service. If you do need to fill some time, do a simple game like head – shoulder – knees cup or use the extra time for life groups!

OPENING SMALL GROUP

QUESTIONS

Take attendance and make sure to welcome anyone who is a first-time guest!

What was the highlight of your week?

What is your funniest memory ever?

When you're finished (and there's time), pray for our time of worship.

STUFF TO ASK TO UNIQUELY CONNECT THE LESSON TO KIDS' LIVES

ACTIVITIES

STUFF TO DO SO THINGS AREN'T BORING



LARGE-GROUP SCRIPT

THE MESSAGE

Get Smart—Week 4 (Be Open) **January 28-29, 2023**

For the last few weeks we have been diving into what it looks like for us to live out Godly Characteristics in our everyday lives. Each week we have been focusing on ways for us to get smarter in The Word of God by diving into how God wants us to be Righteous, be wise, and be a friend.

Today, we are going to finish our series by talking about how important it is to Be Open. And that is exactly what our THP is - **God wants us to be OPEN!**

How can we be open to God and to others? How does that work? It sounds like something we should do or maybe even want to do. But what does that look like and why is it important? I think there are two important parts of being open: the first is

Find someone that you trust.

Proverbs 17:17—*“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.”*

I want you to think back to last week, that person who is your best friend. I am sure one of the many reasons that person is your friend is because you feel you can trust them.

In order for us to be open to other people, we have to share what’s on our heart. Our heart reveals what type of person we are: our hopes/dreams and also our struggles/fears. When we share our heart with people, they get the best sense of who we really are. We are able to be our real selves with them and not have to put up walls like we so often do.

However, it can sometimes be hard to open up to people because they may let us down and that makes us afraid. We all need those 1-2 friends (or more) that we really trust.

One of the main reasons that we have weekly group discussions is so that you can be surrounded by people who care for you and you can be OPEN and real with. There are two kinds of people that you can associate yourself with...people who point you TO God and people who point you AWAY from God.

James 4:8a says this - *“Come near to God and He will come near to you.”*

The only way we can “get smart” in our life and the only way we can come near to God is by doing it TOGETHER! Even if you would say, “I’m open to God,” but you’re not opening up to other people, then I think God would say, “I don’t think you realize what you’re missing. You need community! You need friendships! You need people who help you in challenging times!”

THE MESSAGE

Friends we have said it so many times before but we are not meant to do life alone. We are meant to be in community with other people. They help allow us to be open and real about the things that we need.

But as important as friends are and as helpful as they can be - they are not the person who can fully provide for you.

While your friends can walk with you God is ultimately the one who can change things and will never let you down.. So the second thing we should do is

Pray and ask God for help.

“God, help me!”

Does this sound like the kind of prayer you might have said recently? If so, then you’re already on the right track.

Praying to God for help when life feels impossible doesn’t require a poetry degree or something that is perfectly rehearsed. It requires honesty and authenticity. These qualities were demonstrated in the Scriptures many times. God hears our prayers.

Proverbs 23:12—*“Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.”*

Jeremiah 29:12-13- "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

1 Thessalonians 5:17- “Never stop praying”

No matter how you are feeling or what may be going on in our life, NEVER STOP PRAYING! Even if your prayer life is asking God lots of questions, telling him that you don’t understand why certain things are/are not happening, or even questioning whether you believe in Him or not, you should never stop praying!

I have found that one of the most transparent/open people in all of Scripture is Job. His story is found in the book of Job in the Old Testament. He was tested by God in so many ways: he lost his health, his family members died, all kinds of things. There were times when he praised God and trusted Him, and there were other times where he belly-ached, complained, and doubted God. However, one thing remained constant: HE NEVER STOPPED PRAYING!

God wants you to be open. Open to a community that is rooted in him and open ultimately to God and obedience to him.

Some of you in this room are Christians and I hope this series has challenged and remind you what it looks like to live by the example of Jesus. However, some of you in this room may not be Christians and maybe you have been thinking, “I need help. I need God’s help and I need other people’s help. I want to be open and ready but I don’t even know what that next step looks like”

THE MESSAGE

Did you know that you can have a personal relationship with God? He wants to help you, to be there for you, provide for you, and walk with you through it all because He loves you!

Did you know that God loves us in spite of our failures? Even when we make mistakes, he doesn't abandon us. He comes even closer! If you're here today, and you've never made the decision to accept God's love and start a relationship with Jesus Christ, I want to give you an opportunity to do that today.

I want every head bowed and every eye closed. I'm going to close us in prayer, and if you're serious and would like to make the decision to become a Christian today (and you've never done that before), I want you to repeat this prayer after me to yourself silently. This will be your way to give control of your life to God and be open to Him!

Dear Jesus, thank you for saving me. I know that I have done things that are wrong in my life. I can't live this life on my own. I need You. Please forgive me of my sins. I accept your gift of salvation and I commit to follow You for the rest of my life. Thank you for loving me no matter what. I give you complete control of my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

If you just said that prayer for the first time, this is your first step as a new follower of Christ. That is awesome! It is the best decision that you will ever make! We want to help you take your next steps! I want you to do three things for me if you made that decision...

- Tell someone (family, friends, leaders)
- Get a Bible (if you need one, let your leader know and we can get you one!)
- Get baptized during the next baptism service. Today we get to see just that. We get to go and watch people who have decided just like you that they wanted to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives. It is the outward sign of an inward change, people's way of publicly showing others that they are committed to follow Christ and living in obedience to him for the rest of their lives.

This is why we celebrate - this is a big deal!

I pray that this series has allowed for you to be able to reflect on the example of Jesus and how you can continue to try to live those qualities out in your everyday life. I pray that each of us would learn to do what our THP says and be open to others, and to God and choosing to follow the example of Jesus in our daily lives.

CLOSING SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

CLOSING SMALL GROUP

QUESTIONS

***Leader's Note: Make sure to have some Bibles for the students to use.

What was the THP today and why was it important to the message?

Today, we talked about what it means to be open to God and to be open to others. I'm going to read a couple of verses from our message today to help us think about what this means!

"Come near to God and He will come near to You."
-James 4:8a

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity." -Proverbs 17:17 (Leaders Note: Explain what the word "adversity" means: conflict, challenging situation, etc.)

What do you think it means to be open to God?
What do you think it means to be open to others?
When you are dealing with a difficult situation or challenge, who is the first person that you usually talk to? Why do you talk to that person?

There are two kinds of people in your life: those who point you TO God and those who point you AWAY from God. If you were honest about your group(s) of friends, what category do you think they would be in? Why?

How will the THP help you to live differently this week? Be specific.

How can this group pray for you this week?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Congratulate any students in your group who made a first-time commitment to Christ today. Encourage and remind them that this group can serve as an awesome support system in their life! After your group is finished with your discussion, close in prayer together.

Encourage those students in your group who made first-time decisions or who made re-commitments to follow Jesus today! Tell them that this group is a support system for them and they don't have to do this life alone. If there is a student who makes a first-time commitment to Christ, have them text NVSNEXT to 85379 or fill out a response card so you can capture their information and our staff can follow up with them. Once your group discussion is over, close your group in prayer!



PREP NEEDS

SMALL-GROUP SUPPLIES

- Some Bibles for students to share during group discussion
- Pen/paper for SOAP study (optional)

LARGE-GROUP SUPPLIES

- Stupid Video of the Week
- Game videos and/or slides
- Message script
- Message slides

AUDIO/VISUAL NEEDS

- Pro Presenter or Playlister