HOW TO USE OUR MINISTRY PASS
SERMON SERIES GUIDES

WHAT THIS GUIDE IS NOT

› This guide isn’t a set of sermon manuscripts. While sermon manuscripts can be both useful and a powerful training tool, our sermon series guides are different. Rather than tell you what to say, our aim is for this material to spark your imagination, assist you in planning your sermon, and offer a boost to your study time.

› This guide isn’t ironclad. While we hope you use our material, the pieces of this document are designed to be moved, tweaked, and altered. As you study the suggested passages, and pray through your message, this guide will hopefully be a launching pad, rather than a landing net.

WHAT THIS GUIDE IS

Included in each guide is:

› A sermon series outline that breaks up the teaching set into a specific number of weeks.

› A “big idea” of the series.

› A passage, “big idea” of the sermon, topic list, and a number of illustrations and talking point ideas are included in each weekly section. The “Sermon Ideas and Talking Points” area is filled with observations about the text, relevant applications, creative ideas, and illustrations.

› A small group discussion sheet (located in a separate document in this bundle).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

› Plan ahead. Our guides are best utilized in advance versus the day or night before. Read over the ideas and illustrations provided, thinking through how you can possibly utilize them in your message. We’ve purposely kept our guides simple so as to give you the best opportunity to create your own, unique message.

› While we give you a passage and “big idea” of the message, take time to study the text on your own.

› Utilize the media contained in this bundle to promote and communicate your series message.

› Extend or shorten this series as you see fit.
Rethinking the Church

**Big Idea of the Series:** It’s time to rethink the mission of the local church. It’s more than attending a service. It’s more than giving in the offering. It’s about connecting with a community to pursue a common goal—Jesus. The church, as a whole, is meant to care for each other, grow together, and reach the world together. This four-week series highlights the important responsibility each believer has to their local congregation.

**Week 1**

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-31  
**Topic:** Fellowship, Community  

**Big Idea of the Message:** The church is like a body where all the parts are connected and working together. The health and well-being of one part should be a concern of the entire body.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. 1 Corinthians 12:26 highlights the need for community and fellowship within the body of Christ. We’re all moving toward the same goal, and we need to look out for and care for each other as we move forward. Often, the church can become a place of competition rather than community. We must rethink our motives if we want genuine love to thrive.
2. Our English word “fellowship” is the translation of the Greek word “koinonia.” This Greek word is derived from the root, “koinos,” which was a prefix in ancient Greek. If you were to add this prefix to words like “living,” “owning a purse,” “a dispute,” and “mother,” you would get words meaning “living in community together,” “owning a purse in common,” “a public dispute,” and “having a mother in common.” The root of the word “fellowship” means “to hold something in common.”

https://bible.org/seriespage/3-importance-fellowship-new-testament-church
3. Pastor Rick Warren has a great devotional on 2 Corinthians 8:5: “First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God’s will they gave themselves to us as well.” [http://rickwarren.org/devotional/english/why-you-need-to-join-a-church](http://rickwarren.org/devotional/english/why-you-need-to-join-a-church)
4. Pastor Mark Denver says “I'm concerned that many Christians don't realize how this most important relationship with God necessitates a number of secondary personal relationships—the relationships that Christ establishes between us and his body, the Church. God doesn't mean for these to be relationships that we pick and choose at our whim among the many Christians 'out there.' He means to establish us in relationship with an actual flesh-and-blood, step-on-your-toes body of people.” [http://www.christianity.com/christian-life/should-every-christian-join-a-church-11597964.html](http://www.christianity.com/christian-life/should-every-christian-join-a-church-11597964.html)
5. Have a volunteer (or a leader) come up during the sermon. Take a pack of rubber bands and let the volunteer know you are going to throw them at him or her. Throwing these rubber bands obviously won’t hurt them. After you’ve done it, ask them if you can throw another pack of rubber bands at them. When the say “Yes,” pull out a rubber band ball. Act like you are going to throw it, but don’t. Explain that in unity the local church is stronger than if we live independently of each other.

**Week 2**

**Text:** Philippians 1:12-14

**Topic:** Growth, Conflict

**Big Idea of the Message:** The stories and testimonies of our courage in obeying God can inspire and challenge others to be bolder themselves.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. When the church heard of Paul’s never ending pursuit of spreading the gospel, even in prison, it moved them to greater boldness. Consider having someone share their testimony about a time when God used them to share their faith with someone else.
2. In America, it’s easy for Christians to get a “persecution complex.” While persecution should be avoided if possible, we must learn to rethink how we view adversity. Rather than seeing adversity and conflict as the end, we should view it as an opportunity—much like Paul did.
4. “Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.” Billy Graham.
5. Every Christian needs a church family because growing and maturing is community activity. When adversity comes, we need to lean on each other.
6. A fitness center released an article explaining the benefits of a group training class compared to one-on-one sessions with a personal trainer. “It’s not necessarily competitiveness in terms of performance. It is far more often in terms of effort level. You see other people working hard and because of that a desire to work just
as hard or harder is instilled." [http://rockysfitnesscenter.com/group-exercise/personal-training/](http://rockysfitnesscenter.com/group-exercise/personal-training/)

**Week 3**

**Text:** Galatians 6:1-5  
**Topic:** Accountability, Individualism  
**Big Idea of the Message:** On its own, a member of the body of Christ is weak, but when together in community, the whole of the church has strength to carry burdens.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

2. If a small group is pursuing accountability for the first time, here are some great questions they can ask each other. [http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2008/may/accountability-questions.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2008/may/accountability-questions.html)
3. “We all do better when we all do better.” - Senator Paul Wellstone  
4. In his critically acclaimed book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert D. Putnam laments the breakdown of social life in the United States. While community clubs and bowling leagues once flourished in decades past, individuals and families are now more alone than ever. It’s this part of the local church that we must rethink. It’s this part of the culture that we must fight against. [https://www.amazon.com/Bowling-Alone-Collapse-American-Community/dp/0743203046/](https://www.amazon.com/Bowling-Alone-Collapse-American-Community/dp/0743203046/)
5. The biggest challenge the church faces from its members today is attendance minus participation. Too many families come to service on Sunday, and then shuffle out without embedding themselves into the life-changing community of the local church.

**Week 4**

**Text:** Matthew 25:31-46  
**Topic:** Service, Love  
**Big Idea of the Message:** If the church views helping the needy in our world as if they are caring for Jesus Himself, there’s no way we would sit idly by while they suffered.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. The American ideal life is often a selfish one, but when we see the life-changing effects of God’s grace, how could we keep this to ourselves? How could we not sacrifice to ourselves and show Jesus to those in need?
2. Here’s an illustration idea: Google “Taco Bell Expectation VS Reality” and show your congregation some epic fails when it comes to what the food looks like on the menu, and what people think is okay to actually serve. If fast food workers prepared the
food as if they were preparing their own food, they would handle it with much more care. How much do you care about your service to others?

3. Caring for the poor and needy is more practical than we think. It takes more than positive words to help others out. James 2:14-16 speaks on this. It’s important to pray for others, and encourage them, but how are we the hands and feet of Jesus?

4. This might be a great opportunity to plan an outreach program with your congregation. Build a house, mow lawns, serve hot meals. Get and and do something.

5. If Jesus walked into your church, in the middle of your sermon, everything would stop. Everyone’s plans, schedules, and appointments wouldn’t matter at all anymore. People would drop everything. And if He needed anything at all, you can imagine how quickly people would scramble to help Him. Jesus tells us to help those who need Him the way we’d help Him if He were here.

6. Every once in a while, a viral video comes along showing a celebrity putting on a disguise to go out into the world and interact with people. It’s always entertaining to watch people be oblivious to just who they’re talking to. Here Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker, puts on a stormtrooper uniform. This passage essentially says that we must imagine that everyone around us where Jesus in disguise:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7BwlyNN9rs