REVIEW

If you had to describe the “perfect” spiritual life based on things you’ve heard or read, what would it look like?

What would you have to do? What would you have to not do?

For you personally, what’s been the most difficult aspect of Christianity that you feel you’ve been expected to do—that without it, you’re not really a good Christian?

What aspects of Christian cultural practice have you encountered that simply don’t jive with how God made you?

Why do you think it’s important that God have “house rules” for His people despite our different relationships?

What potential problems do we face with these house rules?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

**Romans 14:1–4.** In the first four verses we read, what is Paul’s opinion of the problem? What attitude does he want the Roman believers to have toward each other?

Where does Paul place the responsibility of each person’s actions before God?

In your experience, what are some extra rules that have caused divisions in the church?

What difference does it make in the way you approach your spiritual life knowing that you’re accountable to God for your actions?

How do Paul’s words in Romans 14 affect your perspective of your spiritual life?

How have you allowed others’ ideas about spiritual living to affect your own spiritual life?
Romans 14:13–23. According to Paul, what’s the point of allowing each other the latitude to grow in relationship with God in the way He’s designed us?

According to verse 23, what determines whether or not our spiritual life is on track?

In light of what we’ve covered in this session, how have you been encouraged?

What questions do you have that might not have been answered?

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read Larry’s book A Contrarian’s Guide to Knowing God, chapters 1–4. Think through the implications of that content on your own spiritual life.

Write: Take five minutes and think through your personality—your likes and dislikes, your temperament, your hobbies. Write down a short description of what your relationship with God would look like played out in your personality.

Discuss: Find ten minutes this week and have a conversation with someone you know who has a thriving relationship with God. Ask them what they do to best relate to God.

Create: Use your creativity and make something that will remind you daily that God designed you to uniquely relate to Him. Set it somewhere you’ll see it on a regular basis.

Pray: Ask God to open your eyes to the spiritual life He’s called you to, and to help you see and remove those unnecessary trappings of clichéd spirituality.
REVIEW

What was the distinctive characteristic of faith that Larry emphasized?

What would change in how you live your life if you embraced the faith-as-obedience model?

What did Larry point out as the problem with “passion”?

What is the one single point of obedience that God expects us to act on?

Why does it take faith to love well?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Matthew 26:36-46. In light of what we’ve discussed about faith, what stands out to you about Jesus’s words to His Father?

In this passage, what picture do we get of Jesus? What very human emotions do we see in Him?

What request does Jesus make of His Father three times?

If we understand faith to mean simple obedience, what does that tell us about Jesus versus Adam in Eden? Who demonstrated faith? How do you know?
Hebrews 11:32–40. What are the two outcomes that the people of faith experienced?

Is outcome a good determiner of faith? Why or why not?

When you look at your own life—the way you’ve thought of faith—what might need to change in light of this session? What have you been doing well?

What small step of obedience do you see in your life that you can respond to today? This week?

DEEPER WALK


Write: Take ten minutes this week and write out the way you’ve historically defined faith and passion. Then, below that, write out what you believe about God’s ability to deliver on His promises. Remember to focus on the object of your faith this week.

Connect: Spend ten minutes talking with a family member or friend about a time in your life when you saw God come through despite your own doubts, concerns, or anxiety. Use the opportunity as a chance to practice small, obedient faith.

Memorize: Commit the definition of faith found in Hebrews 11:1 to memory. Reflect on that verse this week.

Pray: Spend five minutes in prayer with God this week and ask Him to give you a clearer picture of His character and dependability.
REVIEW

What is best practices overload? What does it look like in the life of a believer?

What kinds of Christians do you admire? What about their lives is attractive? What would you like to emulate?

Have you ever felt pressure to be like certain Christians? As if they're the only ones that are doing the Christian life correctly?

Have you ever identified the ways in which God had gifted you to serve His Church? If so, what are they?

Do you like your gifts—the way God's designed you? What gifts feel more enticing? What about less enticing? Why?

How have you combated the grass-is-greener temptation in the past? What's helped you succeed? Where have you failed?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

1 Corinthians 12:12–31. Having read the passage, what problem do you think Paul's addressing? How is it similar to the issue that Larry raised in this session? How is it different?

In the passage, what did Paul say was the source of our unity? What example does Paul use in verses 14–20 to explain the importance of different parts of the body?

Why would it be foolish to want to play a role in God's kingdom that we're not designed to play?

In verses 22–25, what does Paul point out about the "weaker" or "less honorable" parts of the body (roles in God's kingdom)? How would that impact your perspective of what God has called you to do?

Is there any role that's insignificant or unimportant? Why or why not?

What risk do we run when we inflict best-practices overload on ourselves, according to Paul?
Consider the following questions:

What do you get excited about doing? What energizes you? What kind of job could you do for hours and never get tired?

What are you good at? What skills, talents, or work comes naturally to you?

What are you not good at? What would you need other people to help you with?

What have other people told you they think you’re gifted in doing? What have others appreciated about you in the past?

1 Corinthians 13:1–3. According to these verses, what’s the most important thing we need as we participate in God’s kingdom? (Love)

What makes loving others in the body of Christ hard? But according to Paul in this passage, what value are our gifts if we fail to love our brothers and sisters?

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read Larry’s book *A Contrarian’s Guide to Knowing God*, chapters 13–14 and reflect on how the content might impact your own spiritual walk with God.

Write: Take ten minutes this week to sit down and write out two sentences: the first describing what you do well, and the second describing a way you could use that gift to serve God’s people.

Connect: Sit down with your pastor or trusted leader and ask them how they see God using you to serve His Church. Then, this week, do that one thing at least once.

Walk: Take a walk this week—by yourself or with someone whose company you enjoy. Enjoy being you without the pressures of responsibilities for the moment, and consider what God has equipped you to do.

Pray: Take two minutes this week to ask God to open doors for you to serve Him and His people the way He designed you to work best. Then look for those doors to open and step through.
REVIEW

What does “balance” look like in your life? Do you feel like you’ve allotted your time perfectly? Why or why not?

Have you ever arrived at a point in your life where you felt like all your responsibilities were perfectly balanced? If so, how’d you get there? If not, what stopped you?

How would you describe the season of life you’re in right now? What’s your primary focus?

What other responsibilities or obligations are competing for your time in this particular season of your life?

What kinds of things can you do (or have you already done) to make space for the important things in your life?

What kind of help could others offer you in stabilizing your priorities?

What spiritual disciplines are you familiar with? Have any of them been presented to you as optional? Why or why not?

What success (if any) have you had with spiritual disciplines? Which ones? What did they accomplish in your life?

What failures (if any) have you experienced with disciplines? Which ones? Why did you feel like they failed?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Acts 4:32–5:11. In chapter 4, what standard had the church in Jerusalem set? What “discipline” were they participating in?

How do Barnabas’s actions at the end of chapter 4 set up the behavior of Ananais and Sapphira in chapter 5?

What fruit was evident in Ananais’s and Sapphira’s lives? What did the discipline of generosity fail to accomplish in them? Why?
What was the consequence of the Ananais and Sapphira's hypocritical behavior?

Have you ever been tempted to participate in something for appearance's sake? What was it? Why did you feel the need to do it?

What was the result?

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read Larry's book *A Contrarian's Guide to Knowing God*, chapters 15–18. Think through the implications of Larry's points for how you structure your life.

Write: Take ten minutes this week to list off your responsibilities. Then, either by yourself or with help from a family member or friend, organize them according to what needs attention in this moment.

Connect: Take time out of your week to connect with someone who've you've missed out on in recent months. Give yourself permission to create the space needed to spend time with that person—talking, fishing, working out, or however you'll best connect with them.

Reflect: Think through your life from morning to evening. What spiritual disciplines would help in the middle of your day? What could challenge you to grow in the fruit your spiritual life produces? Consider trying out a new discipline.

Pray: Ask God to help you narrow down your vision of balance to what's important in this moment now, and to give you the strength to act on that truth.
REVIEW

In your experience, how have the concepts of leadership and discipleship been confused?

What similarities do you see between our culture’s view of success and the way we often view discipleship?

Who would you point to as a successful disciple? Why? What about their life shows their growth in discipleship?

What might change in how we view our Christian leaders if we separate their leadership from their discipleship?

What might change in our attitude toward ourselves and others when we see discipleship as taking the next small step of obedience to Jesus?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

John 21:1–19. What had happened between Jesus and Peter earlier in the story that led to this moment?

What opportunity is Jesus offering Peter in this section of text?

What step of obedience was Jesus calling Peter into?

What did that step of obedience declare?

John 21:20–22. In light of our discussion about discipleship, what jumps out to you about Peter’s question to Jesus in verse 21?
How does Jesus respond?

What small act of obedience is in front of you today? What other non-essential aspects of discipleship stand between you and that act of obedience?

What has to change in your view of discipleship in light of this discussion?

**DEEPER WALK**

**Read:** Read Larry’s book *A Contrarian’s Guide to Knowing God*, chapter 21–22. In light of everything we've looked at in this series, consider what it means for you to keep God at the center of your life.

**Write:** Take five minutes to think, and then write out on a small piece of paper what you believe your next small step of obedience is. Then put that note where you’ll see it every day.

**Connect:** Find someone in your church or family that you see as growing in their discipleship (not leadership) role. Ask if they'd be willing to talk to you about how they approach their everyday discipleship.

**Share:** Take two minutes this week to share one thing you’ve learned from this series (or a point that’s impacted your life) with someone else.

**Pray:** Thank God for His gracious gift of life, the promise of the resurrection, and the things He has and will continue to do in your life.