

SMALL GROUP AND SUNDAY SERMON SERIES



JOURNEY WITH US AS WE EXPLORE THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE

7 June - 26 July 2026

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

Practising the Way

Week 1 — WALKING IS THE WAY

Week 2 — COMMUNAL HARMONY

Week 3 — THE WAY IS COSTLY

Week 4 — BEING AUTHENTIC

Week 5 — WALKING THE WILDERNESS ROAD

Week 6 — STRENGTH FORGED IN STRUGGLE

Week 7 — THE JOURNEY IS UNFOLDING, AND NEVER FIXED

Week 8 — ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD

*Friends, according to our Christian calendar we are moving into 'Ordinary Time'. This refers to the numbered weeks outside of the major liturgical seasons, lasting about 33-34 weeks each year, and focuses on living out the teachings of Christ in daily life. It emphasizes the ongoing mission of the Church, discipleship, and growth in faith rather than commemorating a single event like Christmas or Easter. Ordinary Time in the Christian calendar is often misunderstood as "plain" or "less important", but it's **the season where discipleship is lived out in daily life**. It is about applying faith in everyday life, not just during festive seasons. Ordinary time reminds Christians that faith is not about high holy days but also about consistent practice and witness in daily life. It provides space for teaching, reflection, and mission, grounding believers in the rhythm of ordinary weeks.*

*I have titled our series "**Practising the Way**". Practising the Way means actively following Jesus' way of life, not just believing in Him. Many churches emphasize belief but neglect formation and this leads to the crisis of discipleship, "**Practising the Way**" addresses this gap. **Practising the Way is essentially about intentional discipleship – ordering life around Jesus' teachings and example, within community, to grow in faith and mission.***

*John Mark Comer wrote a book titled "**Practising the Way**" to help believers move beyond simply believing in Jesus to apprenticing under him. Comer argues that everyone is being formed by something – whether culture, media, or habits – and that Christians must intentionally choose to be formed by Jesus. The book begins by exploring what it means to be an apprentice to Jesus drawing on the ancient rabbinic tradition where disciples*

would follow their teacher closely, imitating not just their words but their way of life. Comer insists that discipleship is not passive belief but active practice, requiring rhythms that open space for God's Spirit to transform us. He frames this apprenticeship around three movements – (e, Become, Do):

- *Being with Jesus* – emphasizes cultivating presence through prayer, silence, scripture, and sabbath. This is about learning to live in constant awareness of God's presence.
- *Becoming like Jesus*: He explains that transformation of character doesn't happen overnight or through sheer willpower alone but through intentional practices – fasting, simplicity, community, and generosity – that reshape desires and habits. These practices are not ends in themselves but means of opening our lives to God's work.
- *And doing as He did*: is about living missionally in the world: serving others, pursuing justice, and sharing the good news in everyday life.

Comer's vision is that discipleship is not reserved for spiritual elites but is the ordinary calling of every believer: to apprentice under Jesus, to be transformed by him, and to live out his way in the world. The book speaks to Christians navigating distraction and hurry, offering concrete steps to integrate faith in ordinary life.

I have chosen the theme 'Practising the Way' to help us see how faith isn't just celebrated in high feasts but embodied in ordinary rhythms. It is about discipleship as a lifestyle rather than a one-time decision. So, Practising the Way is about embodying Jesus' way of life here and now – a radical apprenticeship that reshapes how you spend time, use resources, and relate to others. It is about transformation – not just believing in Jesus but allowing his Spirit to reshape our character so that we increasingly reflect his life. For us, this is a call to slow down, to be present with Jesus, and to let discipleship permeate ordinary routines. To invite believers to see everyday life – work, rest, relationships, service – as the arena where discipleship is lived out. This theme reminds us that discipleship is lived out in the everyday; in how we speak to our families, how we handle work pressures, how we respond to neighbours, and how we steward our time. It is about becoming more Christlike not just in sacred spaces but in the ordinary rhythms of life. Over time, this path produces the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – making believers living witnesses of Jesus in ordinary settings.



Conclusion: As we journey through this series, may we discover that practising the Way is not about perfection but about persistence – not about rigid formulas but about unfolding faith – not about escape from the world but about engaging it with Christ's love. It is not a single step but a lifelong road. So, let us go forth with courage, knowing that the wilderness will not defeat us, the struggle will not break us, and the cost will not outweigh the eternal reward. Practising the Way is walking with Christ – and in Him, the journey itself becomes our joy. Enjoy the journey, for it is the Way of Christ.

God's blessings,
Zamani Sikupela.

Week Four: 28 June 2026

Theme: "Being Authentic"

Scripture: Psalm 139:20-24; James 1:19-25; Romans 12:9 - 21; Matthew 23:27-36

Worship Song: Search me, O God, and know my heart today

<https://youtu.be/syfza7wrea0?si=RzQnAunxU2JyKyg->

Discipleship is not about appearances or empty rituals, but about living truthfully, with integrity, and in alignment with Christ. Authenticity means our walk matches our talk – our faith is real, consistent, and transparent. It is living truthfully before God and others, where faith is not performance but genuine love, obedience, and Spirit-led integrity. Being authentic in Scripture is about living truthfully, sincerely, and consistently – allowing God's Spirit to shape both our inner life and outward actions.

Reflection on the Scriptures written by: LOCAL PREACHER – TONY MATTHEE

On reading all the passages of Scripture that have been given to us, I believe “Being Authentic” requires two disciplines: (1) Rejecting evil and (2) Practising good.

(1) Rejecting evil

In Psalm 139 we find that lovely verse “*Search me, God, and know my heart.*” (vs 23) The psalmist then goes on to say, “*See if there is any offensive way in me.*” In this prayer he is asking God to reveal any evil in him so that he could ask for forgiveness. By contrast, the Pharisees and Teachers were filled with evil but did not realise it. What I find so challenging is that these religious leaders were looked up to and highly respected by ordinary citizens, yet Jesus reserves his harshest judgement for them. He called them hypocrites, blind fools, whitewashed tombs, snakes, brood of vipers, and ends off with “*How will you escape being condemned to hell?*” (vs 33)

They sought and thrived on the praises of men, while seeking the praises of God did not seem to enter their minds. They made their laws into God’s laws. If this sort of tirade was levelled by Jesus on religious leaders, should not we, who are Christians and leaders in the Church, not seriously ask God to reveal any evil in us like the palmist did. We think that evil is associated with murder, adultery, drunkenness, sexual orgies and the like, but what about lesser evils like greed, pride, gluttony, lying and the like. If we commit just one small sin, we fall into the category of “sinner” and in need of a Saviour.

I have often been challenged by the text, “*Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name..... and in your name perform many miracles?*” (Matt. 7: 22) The Lord then says, “*I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers.*” (vs 23) Obviously, these people were putting on a show to impress people and at the same time not pleasing God. Leaders will be harshly judged because they influence followers to do as they do and live as they live.

(2) Practising good

Being authentic in our Christian way of life will make us different. The Bible teaches that “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old is gone, the new is here!*” (2 Cor. 5: 17) As Christians the Holy Spirit has taken residence in us and one of the first fruits of the Spirit is Love. The passage given to us in Romans is entitled “*Love in action.*” Take note of the qualities that we are required to embody: to be devoted to one another, honour one another, serve the Lord, be joyful, be patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, help those in need, practice hospitality, live in harmony with one another. This list is far from being complete, but it highlights the fact that as Christians we dance to a different drumbeat to the world. We cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. We are either one or the other.

In practical terms this means, for example, if we are asked to visit someone on a particular day, we can respond by saying that we cannot come as we have another meeting on that day. Compare that with a reply that is truthful by saying that we cannot come as we have an important meeting at our Church on that day. The first reply seeks to blend in with the world. The second reply shows being authentic. We are not ashamed of being seen as Christians.

This sentiment is also addressed in the James passage. “*Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.*” (James 1: 22) The emphasis is on action. In doing what the word says, we will be making a statement for the whole world to see. Not only will we be getting “*rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent,*” (James 1: 21) but by listening to the word and putting it into action we will be authentic.

Life group Questions (taking discussions deeper):

1. How would you recognize evil in Church leaders? What should your response be?
2. Are you happy with the method used in our Church to appoint leaders? Would you suggest any changes to be made to ensure they are authentic.
3. To what extent do we as Christians differ from the ordinary man in the street? Should we force our style of living on others?
4. James is rich in authentic living. Consider some of the sub-headings found in this book: Listening and doing, Favouritism Forbidden, Faith and Deeds, Taming the tongue, Submit yourselves to God, etc. Discuss as many as you can.

Daily Memory Verse and Prayer:**MONDAY**

Memory Verse: *“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”* — Psalm 139 139:23

Prayer: Lord, search our hearts and reveal anything that does not honour You. Lead us in Your truth and shape us to walk in Your everlasting way.

TUESDAY

Memory Verse: *“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”* — James 1:19

Prayer: Father, help us to listen with patience and speak with wisdom and grace. Teach us to reflect Your peace in every conversation today.

WEDNESDAY

Memory Verse: *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* — James 1:22

Prayer: Lord, help us not only to hear Your Word but to live it out faithfully. Give us obedient hearts that reflect Your love through our actions.

THURSDAY

Memory Verse: *“Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.”* — Romans 12:10

Prayer: Father, fill our hearts with genuine love and humility toward others. Help us to serve and encourage one another with kindness and sincerity.

FRIDAY

Memory Verse: *“Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.”* — Romans 12:21

Prayer: Lord, strengthen us to respond to hardship and injustice with grace and goodness. Let Your love shine through us even in difficult situations.

SATURDAY

Memory Verse: *“Woe to you... you are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead.”* — Matthew 23:27

Prayer: Jesus, make our lives genuine and pure before You, not merely outwardly pleasing. Transform our hearts so that our inner lives reflect Your holiness and truth.

Family Devotion: Being Authentic – Being Real with God and Others: Compiled by: Jenny Blake**Scriptures**

- Psalm 139:20–24
- James 1:19–25
- Romans 12:9–21
- Matthew 23:27–36

Worship Song

"Give Me Oil in My Lamp (Sing Hosanna)" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gB7QJ3P3qM>

Opening Question

"Have you ever worn a costume or pretended to be someone else?" (Allow everyone to share.)

"What happens when we pretend for too long?" Explain that costumes are fun for games—but in real life, God wants us to be honest and real. God already knows us completely and still loves us.

Short Devotion

Have you ever smiled when you were upset? Or said "I'm fine" when you really weren't?

Today's theme is **Being Authentic**, which means being real and honest with God and others.

In Psalm 139, David asks God to search his heart and show him anything that needs to change. David knew that God sees everything—not to shame us, but because He loves us and wants to help us grow. James tells us not just to hear God's Word but to live it. He compares God's Word to a mirror. A mirror shows us what is there. God's Word helps us see who we really are and who God is helping us become.

In Romans 12, Paul says: **"Love must be sincere."** That means real love—not pretending, showing off, or only being kind when people are watching. Jesus warned the religious leaders not to look good on the outside while ignoring what was happening in their hearts. God cares more about our hearts than appearances. Being authentic doesn't mean being perfect. It means being honest, letting God shape us, and choosing to live with love and truth.

Object Lesson**Mirror Challenge**

Bring a mirror. Ask everyone to look into it and answer:

- What do you notice first?
- Can the mirror change what it sees?

A mirror only shows what is already there. God's Word works like a mirror. It helps us see ourselves honestly, not so we feel bad, but so God can help us grow into who He created us to be.

Ask everyone: **"What is one beautiful thing God sees in you?"**

Discussion Time**Younger Children (Ages 4–8)**

1. What does it mean to tell the truth?
2. Does God know what is in our hearts?
3. Why is it important to be kind all the time—not only when people are watching?
4. What is one good thing God made in you?

Older Children & Teens

1. Why do people sometimes pretend to be someone they are not?
2. What does authentic faith look like?
3. How can social media make authenticity difficult?
4. What part of Romans 12 challenges you most?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that we never have to pretend with You. Search our hearts and help us become people who are honest, loving, and sincere. Teach us to live what we believe and to show Your love in the way we speak and act. Help our family to be a place where people can be real and grow together. Amen.

Family Challenge for the Week

Every day this week, answer this question together:

“What is one thing I felt today and one thing I am thankful for?”

Practise being honest, listening well, and encouraging one another