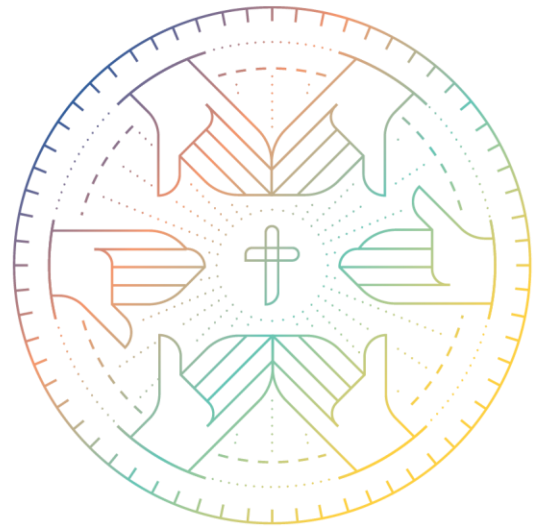


# Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

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## MEETING AGENDA

### WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week we are continuing our series *Love: Over-used & Under-lived*. In our third week, we will examine how envy and boasting can creep into our lives in devastating ways and how Christ-centeredness is the only way to overcome envy and boasting.

Don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email.

### ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

What characteristic do you think is most important for a close friend to have?

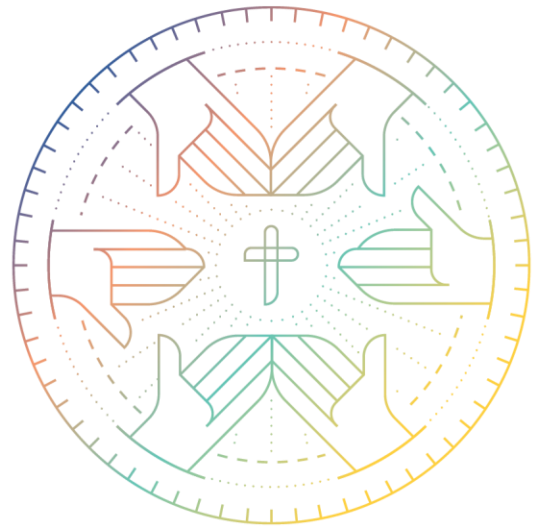
### INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Anchor Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:1-4

Paul continues his instruction to the Corinthian church looking at two things love is not, envious or boastful. We will see that envy is an attitude that leads to the action of boastfulness and this plays out in our lives as self-absorption, resentfulness, and comparison.

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## INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

1. Read Proverbs 14:30 and James 3:14-16. Envy is defined as boiling with jealousy or jealousy on steroids. We see envy show up in our lives in three main ways. They are:

- 1) Self-absorption or living for self
- 2) Resentment or withholding of love
- 3) Comparison or viewing the world as more than or less than me

Which way or ways do you see envy pop up in your life?

### H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

*[Answers will vary. William Kennedy states, "Envy is something that most people are familiar with. When we see that someone has something we would like to have – physical possessions, or personality traits, or ministries, or talent – then a natural human reaction is to envy them... It is not a sin to be tempted to envy, but if it is allowed to live and fester, it becomes destructive. Why is envy sin? Because it divides people. It destroys relationships, sows discord, and creates a spirit of bitterness and evil. It causes people to act and speak in toxic ways."]*

2. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Galatians 6:2, and James 5:16. Boasting is defined as the idea of not needing others. Throughout scripture, we see an emphasis placed on the importance of needing others in our lives. How do you see envy and boasting, or the attitude of not needing others, creep into your life or the lives of your friends?

### H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

*[Answers will vary. When we internally decided that we didn't need others, we placed the total weight and burden of the area we were dealing with squarely on our understanding and ability. Scripture clarifies that we were never designed to carry our struggles alone. When we can open and engage in inviting others into our lives, we can receive love. Paul makes it clear that we as believers all play an essential role and have unique gifts and areas of strength that together we can strengthen each other. This requires us to be in a relationship with each other.]*

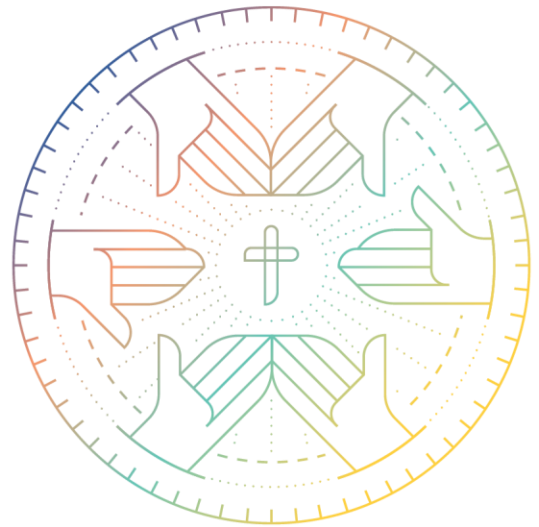
3. Read Romans 12. Weeding out envy in our lives is an active process that takes intentional action, not to let it creep into our lives. What sticks out from this passage?

### H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

*[Answers will vary. In Romans 12, We must break free from, rather than conforming to, the me-first way the human world prefers. We must have our minds renewed, to look at the world through God's eyes, to begin to understand what He wants instead of focusing on what we want. The first investment of this sacrificed life that God asks from us is to serve each other in the church... Next, Paul paints a picture of a living-sacrifice lifestyle... This life of sacrifice will involve our mind, will, and emotions. We must continually acknowledge that our hope, our future in eternity with God, is worth celebrating. The suffering in this life is real, but we know it is temporary. We will be patient as we wait. We will also pray continually to the Father who hears and responds to us through the Holy Spirit. (Bibleref.com)]*

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## APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

1. Read James 4:1-3. One of the ways envy creeps into our lives is through being self-absorbed. The fruit of a Self-absorbed life is the self-destruction or shallowness of relationships. Do you struggle with self-absorption, and in what ways can you actively fight against the urge to make things focused on you?

### H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. C.S. Lewis stated, "True humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." Steve Sabol of lifeway church gave this advice, "Caring about somebody else is the fastest way to get your focus off yourself. Give yourself away through some kind of service. I'm convinced that to be spiritually and emotionally healthy and balanced, everybody needs some form of service on at least a weekly basis, where they voluntarily give themselves away without receiving any personal benefit in return.... But every day you need to find at least one opportunity where you can choose to do **the thing of conviction**, rather than **the thing of convenience**."] ]

2. Read Philippians 2:3-4 and Galatians 5:13-15. We can combat envy in our lives by
  - 1) Finding contentment
  - 2) Rejoicing when others are blessed
  - 3) Focusing on the needs of othersWhat practical steps can you take this week to implement these in your life?

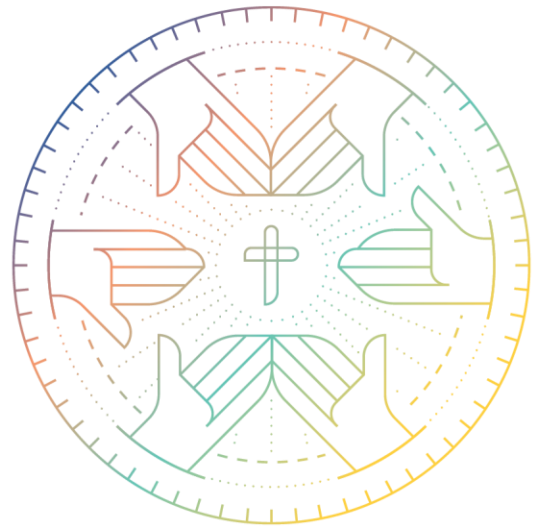
### H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Examples could include keeping a gratefulness journal where you document what you are grateful for. Treating a friend or coworker to a coffee or treat when they have something to celebrate in their lives. It could also look like asking someone how you can help them or they share what they have going on in their life.] ]

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## **PRAYER (10 MINUTES)**

*Dear heavenly Father,*

*May we not allow envy and boastfulness to creep into our lives. Help us to get rid of any jealousy or selfish ambition in our hearts but instead, help us to seek the best in others and cultivate a heart of gratitude and contentment. May people know us by our love. In Your holy and excellent name, we pray, amen.*