

# Embody



### Embody – Introduction to the series.

#### ICEBREAKER

If you imagine someone who embraces what it means to be an Ohio State Buckeye fan, what attributes come to your mind?

OR

If you had to pick one value, virtue, or principle you would like to embody more in your daily life, what would it be and why?

#### SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEO

Scan the QR code found on the right side of the back of your “HOST RESOURCES” card in your small group kit. Watch or listen to the video as a group, prior to starting the rest of your discussion.

#### INTRODUCTION

For Fairhaven, the concept of "Find Hope" emerged years ago when research revealed that hopelessness was one of our community's main struggles. Consequently, we wanted our community to know that genuine, lasting hope can be found in a relationship with Jesus. That's how a simple idea became the heartbeat of our church.

Do you believe that hope is still a resounding need within our communities? Why?

How has the hope of Jesus changed your life?

Over the next six weeks, we want to clarify our approach to remain effective in our mission of helping people Find Hope in Jesus. We are so glad you're with us!

## WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION

### INTO GOD'S WORD

**Read Romans 15:13.** How is God “the God of hope”? What is the connection between the power of the Holy Spirit and your hope? Does your faith bring you joy and peace? How?

**Host Guidance:** God is “the God of hope” because He is the source and giver of true, lasting hope. Biblical hope is not just a wishful desire for something good to happen, but a confident expectation rooted in God’s character and his promises. The Holy Spirit makes God’s hope real to us; He works through our faith to bring hope to life.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:15-17.** What does it mean to “no longer live for themselves” in the context of this verse?

**Host Guidance:** This phrase suggests that believers, having been saved through Christ’s death and resurrection, should shift their focus from self-centered living to Christ-centered living. It is a call to align one's life with God's kingdom purposes rather than worldly, personal desires.

How does Christ’s death change the way we view and live our lives?

**Host Guidance:** Christ’s death and resurrection give us a new identity and purpose. Instead of being bound by the pursuit of selfish ambitions and worldly pleasures, we are called to live in service to Christ, embodying His love and purpose in the world.

What does it mean for “the old to pass away”? How might this play out in a believer's life?

**Host Guidance:** The “old” refers to the sinful patterns, behaviors, and attitudes that defined a person before coming to faith in Christ. In practical terms, this means that a believer will experience changes in their values, lifestyle, and worldview as they learn about God, study the Bible, pursue holiness, and grow in Christlikeness.

In what ways does the “new” life in Christ manifest itself?

## WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION

**Host Guidance:** The new life in Christ manifests in various ways, such as a renewed mind, a softened heart, an enlivened conscience, a desire to live righteously, and the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, etc.). Believers are also given a new sense of purpose — to glorify God and share His love with others.

**Read 1 Peter 1:8-11.** What increasing qualities is Peter referring to? How do these qualities protect us from being ineffective or unfruitful?

**Host Guidance:** The qualities Peter is referring to are faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. In totality, these qualities reflect a life that has been transformed through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. They represent a person who has embraced and embodied the hope of Jesus in every area of their life. Such a person will be both effective and fruitful as they live the hope of Jesus.

Why do you think these qualities are connected to a “richly provided... entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”?

**Host Guidance:** Reflecting these qualities in our everyday life, which will naturally cause us to be fruitful and effective in representing Christ to the world around us, is exactly what God has redeemed us to do. Growing in Christlikeness and impacting the world around us brings God’s “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matt. 25:23) Such a servant will receive a rich entrance into God’s eternal kingdom, as Peter states.

### A P P L I C A T I O N

1. Daily surrender to hope in God: begin your day by surrendering your concerns, anxieties, and desires to God in prayer. Acknowledge Him as the God of hope, asking the Holy Spirit to fill you with joy and peace as you trust Him.
2. Rely on the Holy Spirit for empowerment: make it a daily habit to invite the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and emotions, especially when facing challenging situations.

## WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION

3. Live for Christ, not yourself: ask God to help you see choices you are making that are self-centered, versus others-centered or God-centered. When He does, respond in obedience to correct that choice.
4. Grow in spiritual qualities: choose one quality from 1 Peter 1:8-11 to focus on this week. Pray that God would help you to see ways to grow that quality within you and ways to express that quality in everyday life.

### P R A Y E R

*Dear Father, I recognize and acknowledge that you were inviting me into a deeper life with you, which will help me better live the life that you created me to live. I confess that there are lots of ways in which I need to grow deeper in my love for you and my desire to walk in the light. Thank you for your immeasurable grace and patience. Lead me to thirst for the living water that only you can provide help me to embrace and embody the hope of Jesus each and every day. Amen.*

### S U G G E S T E D   R E S O U R C E S

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Comer, John Mark. *Practicing the Way: Becoming Like Jesus*. WaterBrook, 2023.