

# Awkward Conversations.

(something needs to change)

## SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM / WEEK EIGHT

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 24:13-35 // The Return  
**BIG IDEA FOR THE SERIES:** Jesus desires dramatic change in the status quo.  
**THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA:** When we recognize Christ, we realize He was always pursuing us.

### CULTURAL CONTEXT

**The Setting:** Potent celebration and piercing loss marked the past several days in Jerusalem. Pilgrims from all over the region had trekked to the temple to celebrate Passover (the Jewish holiday remembering the Angel of Death passing over them in Egypt, and God providing for them a miraculous exodus). The city had been bloated with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. In this crammed setting news of Jesus' crucifixion spread with great speed. A public execution during a feast holiday would have been robustly discussed.

**The Story:** On this Sunday morning, the first travel day after the festivities, Cleopas and another (perhaps it was the Cleopas and his wife, Mary, mentioned in John 19:25) set off for their seven-mile walk to Emmaus. Jesus joins them, which would be quite typical, as pilgrims by the droves return home. However, neither Cleopas nor his travel companion recognize Jesus for who he is.

Cleopas is astonished Jesus had not heard the news about the recent events. Cleopas shares that he had hoped Jesus would be the one to redeem Israel and he recounts the story about the angel and empty tomb. However, the larger story of God's redemption has eluded him.

Jesus walks Cleopas and the other [suggest use instead, or another noun: his companion] through the Hebrew Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets), revealing God's plan for his Son en route. Rabbis were lauded for being able to teach deeper connections weaved through Scripture. However, what these listeners didn't realize at the time was that Jesus was teaching about himself.

As the couple [suggest use instead: two] reached their home they asked this great teacher to stay. They wanted more time with him and hospitality was a core value. Jesus' feigning to go farther was a typical way to test if the offer of hospitality was a genuine one. It wasn't until he took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it that they recognized him. Perhaps they had seen Jesus do this when he had fed the five thousand or shared meals with his disciples. Suddenly, the stranger who had spent a seven-mile walk revealing God's redemption and imparting hope, vanished.

## Series Outline:

Week One: The Homecoming (4:14-30)  
Week Two: The Moving On (4:38-44)  
Week Three: The Centurion (7:1-10)  
Week Four: The Funeral (7:11-17)  
Week Five: The Parable (8:1-15)  
Week Six: The Prayer (11:1-13)  
Week Seven: The Obstacle (18:18-30)  
> **Week Eight: The Return (24:13-35)** <

### BIBLICAL INTENT/IMPLICATIONS

Here are two implications for you and your group to reflect upon:

**REFRAMING TRAGEDY AND HOPE** - Cleopas and his travel companion seemed to lack the framework to see God's movement through history and through the events of their day. The two had certain expectations of how God would come and redeem his people, expectations that seemed absent of suffering.

However, when Jesus shared with them the larger story they recounted, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" As much as we might fight it or simply miss out on it, we long for a larger story, for a story that gathers up all of life's joys and sorrows and makes sense of it... a story beyond ourselves. That's what Jesus offers.

**REVEALING GOD'S PURSUIT** - Not only did Jesus give Cleopas and his travel companion an understanding of God's redemption of the world, Jesus gave them a concrete picture of God's personal pursuit of them. It's quite curious that Jesus, the resurrected God-Man, would choose to spend a chunk of his day hiking with two people who he called "slow of heart." Yet, Jesus did. Jesus flips their gestures of hospitality and shows them that all along it was the God of the universe hosting their questions and bringing them home.

### HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

Encourage members to read the Scripture before group; if they weren't at Warehouse on Sunday they can download the mp3 at [www.warehouse242.org](http://www.warehouse242.org). During group read the passage together. Have extra Bibles available to ensure that everyone has a copy. The goal of Scripture—and of this discussion material—is not information expansion but rather increased intimacy with the Father, Son and Spirit. It's God who enables that to happen, so be sure to pray for divine insight as you move through Scripture.

### COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

> When Jesus speaks about himself in the Hebrew Scriptures he likely mentions Deuteronomy 18:15-18, Isaiah 9, 11 and 53. However, there are many other images and implications of God's pursuit and promises of a Messiah. What might Jesus have shared about himself in Scripture?

> What are cultural and personal obstacles to recognizing Jesus in our midst?

> How are you as a small group experiencing God's pursuit?

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

> What are you currently discovering about Jesus? How is He reframing tragedy and hope in your own story?

> What is making it hard for you to embrace "resurrection hope" at the moment?

> When do you most experience God's pursuit?

### COMMUNITY RESPONSE

This week meditate on Luke 24:32: "They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'"