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CHANGING LIVES.
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STARTING POINT

SESSION 1

STARTING POINT 1 : **KNOW**

We are so happy you have joined us for our Starting Point! Throughout this three part course, we are going to get to know each other and help you get plugged in to our community. We don't necessarily want something from you; we want something for you. We want you to experience deeper connections, a bigger sense of purpose, and a better relationship with God.



BIG IDEA:

Our church exists to connect you to God and to others.



SMALL GROUP OBJECTIVE:

We are going to get to know each other, learn about our church, and discuss practical ways to connect.



SCRIPTURE USED:

Matthew 16:17
1 Peter 2:5-6

- We want you to experience deeper connections, a bigger sense of purpose, and a better relationship with God.
- **How do we achieve all of that? Through the local Church!**
 - We are not talking about just our church either. We are talking about **the church.**
 - The church is God’s mission materialized.
 - It’s where people experience Him, grow to know Him, and connect with fellow believers on a similar journey.
 - It’s so much bigger than a building, it’s a state of being. And here is the good news—we get to be a part of it.
 - Look at how Jesus talked about His church shortly before going to the cross.
- **Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it" (Matthew 16).**
 - Jesus is building something special with you, and those around you.
 - Something that is strong, supernatural, and that will succeed for all eternity.
 - And we get to be a part of that—the church of Jesus Christ.
 - Peter illustrates this concept really well in 1 Peter 2:5-6.

BIBLE STUDY

1 Peter 2:5-6

“And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. As the Scriptures say, “I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.”

- Peter uses a familiar metaphor to people living in the growing Roman world — stones making up a building.
 - It's mind-blowing to watch a building project unfold. Construction workers can transform pallets upon pallets of bricks into a beautiful building. Through tedious work and lots of concrete, they assemble brick upon brick until they form a wall. One wall becomes four walls. Four walls become foundational structures that form a building. **A brick by itself is just a doorstep or a paperweight**, but a bunch of bricks can become a home.
- When Peter is writing to the suffering Christians in the Roman Empire, he calls them **“living stones.”**
 - At first glance, that's pretty lame. Who wants to be called a brick? I'd want to be something cooler than that. But think about it. When stones get together with other stones, they become something amazing. The Great Wall of China is just some stones. The pyramids are made up of a bunch of bricks. This passage teaches that Jesus is building His church—with us.

So, What does our church believe. What are the foundational things that are not negotiable for us.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We are a part of larger, global organization called the Church of God. The COG has over 8 million member worldwide.

The Church of God believes the whole Bible to be completely and equally inspired and that it is the written Word of God. The Church of God has adopted the following Declaration of Faith as its standard and official expression of its doctrine.

PLEASE READ AND CONSIDER THESE IMPORTANT DECLARATIONS:

We Believe:

- In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
- In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
- That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.
- That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.
- That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
- In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.
- Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
- In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.
- In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
- In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
- Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.
- In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet.
- In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.
- In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.

We are all working together to build something amazing in our community. We accomplish all of this with three vital building blocks—our people, our programs, and our purpose.

- **ONE: Our People**

- By yourself, you are a mere rock. When you come together with other people, we start to build something amazing.
- Church is not something we do, it's who we are. We are not a building, we are a body. Our church is made up of people, volunteers, and staff who work together to achieve our shared goal.
- We would love for you to be a part of that.
 - For many years Montclair Tabernacle has been a light in the Dumfries, Va area. In 1979 the congregation moved from a modest location on Possum Point Road to it's current location at 16120 Dumfries Road.
 - That move was a giant leap of faith for the members of the church at that time. Through years of tremendous challenges and amazing blessings, God has brought us to this divine moment in history Montclair Tab. has the privilege of ministering to over 300 people each week in our two services, and our Wednesday night programs have no room to expand.
 - Since its inception our church has a had goal of reaching our world... one life at a time. We do this by Encountering God through Worship, Equipping believers with the Word, Engaging others through Ministry, and Enlarging the Kingdom through Outreach.
 - Over the years we have encountered moments of significant growth in our church. Each of these historical times have produced a need for more space, more ministry, and more people who will join us in carrying out this vision that God has placed in our hearts. We are now at a pivotal moment in the life of our church and we are believing God for a season of breakthroughs in every area of our church and in the lives of individuals.
 - You are here at a very exciting and strategic season of our church history. We are at a threshold of accomplishing a God sized task. With everyones involvement, it is our plan to build the Kingdom. God given dreams are never reached alone. You can share in this great cause by committing your best effort in support of what God is doing in our church family.

- **TWO: Our Programs**

- We are here to help you develop your spiritual life.
 - We preach the word of God.
 - We pray together.
 - We grow together.
 - We serve the community together.
 - We worship together.
 - We are growth-minded in everything we do, and we want to help you experience a deep, fulfilling, growing relationship with God.
- **Let's get specific.** These are some of the programs that we offer as a church. Please take notes as we work through these, marking any that you may have questions about or a connection to.
 - Small Groups (Various types)
 - Kids Ministry
 - Youth Ministry
 - Young Adult Ministry
 - Discipleship Classes
 - Music Ministry
 - Media Ministry
 - Homeless Ministry
 - Outreach Ministry

- **THREE: Our Purpose**

- Like we have discussed today, Jesus is building His church and we get to be a little piece of that story.
- Not only is Jesus building something monumental here at **Montclair Tabernacle ...** he has the perfect blueprint for this building.
 - All of our programs have one thing in common — they have the same purpose. We exist to.... **to help every person BELIEVE in Jesus, BELONG to a family, BECOME a disciple and BUILD His kingdom.**
- Every single thing we do revolves around that grounding principle.
- What good is a building if it doesn't have a strong foundation?
 - Peter shows us where to find our foundation — **it's in the cornerstone of Christ (2:6)**. This means that Jesus is our firm foundation.
 - He's holding us all together. "The Church" isn't built on a pastor or programs.
 - It's built on a person named Jesus. If you build your life on the foundation of Jesus with the support of a Christian community, you will be able to withstand anything.
 - Jesus is the foundation of everything we do.
 - Everything else is designed to point people back to Jesus.
- We would like you to see who we are and get a glimpse of our heart. That's why we want to end by helping you see our purpose as a church.

OUR MISSION:

Our mission is to be a place where people passionately pursue the will of God for their lives. Where all ages are learning how to follow Jesus with all of their heart, and where each believer is serving Christ by serving others.

THE MONTCLAIR TABERNACLE “CORE VALUES” The Code

The Code. It's what we call our set of core values here at Montclair Tabernacle. This is not our mission or vision statement and is different than our statement of faith—it has more to do with focus and perspective.

As the church moves forward, we realize that God had given us certain strengths and governing principles that we really feel passionate about. So, we set out to put words to those passions and compiled our list of core values. It was prayerfully created, intensely weighed, checked, and double checked before it became just the right set of guiding principles for our church.

Now, we want it to shape everything we do. **The Code** gives leadership something to look toward, ministries a pattern to go by, and church folk something to be encouraged by.

1. We are faith-filled, big thinking, out of the box risk takers.

We must be willing to hear from God and then pursue with passion.

2. We are Kingdom Builders!

The local church is the hope of the world and connected to a global Church that is carrying out the will of God on this earth to build the Kingdom of our Lord.

3. We give up things we love for things we love even more.

It's an honor to sacrifice for Christ and His church.

4. We will always love people to life.

We embrace people and believe that God has called each person from death to life through Christ no matter their background.

5. We will do all we can to reach people who don't know Christ.

To reach people no one is reaching, we'll have to do things no one is doing.

6. We will lead the way with hilarious generosity.

We truly believe it is more blessed to give than to receive.

7. We will laugh hard, loud, and often.

Nothing is more fun than serving God with people you love!

8. We always bring our best.

Excellence honors God and inspires people.

9. We are spiritual contributors not spiritual consumers.

The church does not exist for us. We are the church and we exist for the world.

10. We will honor Christ and His church with integrity.

If we live with integrity, nothing else matters. If we don't live with integrity, nothing else matters.

END OF SESSION 1