

Life Group Notes 4/12/2026 Mark Warren The Family of God— Week One

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– *Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.*

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Leaders: *please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group. Scan the detailed questions that follow the AI-generated study questions, to see if you want to add any more detailed questions.*

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 4/12. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another***

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

This format begins with an AI generated [summary of the notes](#), followed by AI generated [study questions](#). This week, [notes in full detail](#) can be found beginning on page 3: _____

Section I: Summary

Here's "co-pilot's" AI summary of the Sermon Lifegroup Notes

The highlighted portion emphasizes that God's work in believers is meant to form a spiritual family, not just transform individuals. It argues that real discipleship requires real, ongoing relationships where people actively support one another—sharing burdens, offering encouragement and correction, and practicing honest, "in the light" fellowship rather than isolation. It also notes common obstacles to this kind of community (busyness, fear of vulnerability, past hurts, and an individualistic mindset) and points to the early church as a practical model of intentional, shared life. The overall call is to move beyond events and surface connection into deeper relationships where people are known and grow together.

Section II: AI Generated Study questions

Facilitator's Guide (60 Minutes)

Purpose: Help the group respond to the call to move from individual faith to spiritual family formation through real, intentional relationships.

Before you start (prep): Read the highlighted notes once through. Choose 2–3 questions below that best fit your group's maturity and time. Plan to protect time for prayer at the end.

Supplies / setup: Copies of the notes (or phones open to them), pens, and a simple way to track time. Sit in a circle so everyone can see each other.

Group agreements (say briefly): Keep confidence, give each person time, speak from your own life (not about others), and aim for gentleness—especially when discussing vulnerability, hurts, or correction.

60-minute flow (suggested):

1. **0–5 min | Welcome + opening prayer.** Ask God to heal hearts, guide the discussion, and help the group practice love.
2. **5–12 min | Check-in (one sentence each).** “Where have you felt most connected lately—and where have you felt alone?”
3. **12–20 min | Re-read the highlighted emphasis (out loud).** Either read the highlighted portion or read the short summary above.
4. **20–45 min | Discussion (pick 2–3 sections below).** Keep answers concrete and personal; invite quiet voices.
5. **45–55 min | Ministry moment.** Share needs, then pray specifically (burdens, healing, courage, next steps).
6. **55–60 min | Commitments + close.** Each person names one relational “yes” they will take this week; close in prayer.

Discussion sections (choose 2–3):

A) From individual transformation to family formation (20–28 min)

- In your own words, what's the difference between God changing *me* and God forming *us* into a family?
- Where do you see a “consumer” approach to church (events, content, attendance) replacing family life?
- What would it look like for our group to function more like a household than a weekly meeting?

B) Real relationships are required for real discipleship (28–36 min)

- What is a “real relationship” in a discipleship sense (not just friendship)? What makes it real?
- When have you experienced someone helping you grow—challenging, encouraging, or correcting you with love?
- If you feel “stalled,” could there be a relational next step God is inviting you into? What might it be?

C) “In the light” fellowship and burden-bearing (36–45 min)

- What does it look like *practically* to “walk in the light” with one another (honesty, confession, follow-up, prayer, boundaries)?
- Why is it hard to let others see your burdens? What makes it easier?

- What is one burden you can name (as much or as little detail as you choose) that the group can pray for tonight?

Optional D) Obstacles and a practical vision (if time) (pick 1 prompt)

- Which obstacle is most real for you right now—busyness, fear of vulnerability, past hurts, or “I don’t need anyone”? What would a small, wise step forward look like?
- The early church shared life intentionally. What parts of that kind of life feel possible for us (and what would need to change)?

Facilitator tips (quick):

- When conversation gets abstract, ask: “What would that look like this week?”
- If someone shares something heavy, thank them, ask what support they want (prayer only? follow-up?), and keep confidentiality.
- If someone dominates, gently redirect: “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t shared yet.”
- If conflict arises, slow down, restate the goal (love and unity), and move to prayer.

Take-home challenge (choose one): (1) Invite one person from the group into a conversation this week (walk/coffee/phone) and share one real burden. (2) Ask: “Who actually knows me—and whose life am I actually in?” Then take one concrete step toward being known.

Closing prayer prompt: Ask God to make your group a true spiritual family, to give courage for vulnerability, and to help each person take one obedient relational step this week.

Section III: Complete study notes

Pastor began the series with this introduction: “When God is doing something, we don’t have to come up with ideas on our own. We just say, ‘God what are you doing and what is our role in it?’ We are not to live as if we were abandoned, stranded people, He also places us in a family. When we come to know Jesus, we learn that we are not just ‘saved from sin,’ but we are saved to be placed into a family.”

1. Have you noticed this?
2. What have you seen?
3. What are your thoughts on the Church in Laconia, and Grace’s efforts to support them in tradition? What does this say about the mission of the Church?
4. What is the family of God?
5. What does this mean, “We are not meant to do life alone?”
6. How have we become “the most connected generation history?”
7. What are the drawbacks to this fact? How do more connections make each connection weaker?
8. What does it mean to be placed into a family?

Why Real Relationships are Required for Real Discipleship.

Pastor suggests that discipleship is what happens when one says to another: “Hey, let me just help you along.”

1. What do you think? What’s a “real relationship?”
2. What is the alternative?
3. Do you have a testimony?

Pastor suggests that if we're stalled, and we're not growing in our discipleship, it could be that we have not taken the steps required in our relationships.

1. What do you see?
2. What, if anything, holds you back?

Look up Ephesians 2:¹⁹*Therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in Him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God in His Spirit.*

1. What do you see?
2. How did you become a fellow citizen?
3. Who are your compatriots? Who all is in the household of God?
4. What is the foundation of this household?
5. Who else lives in this house with us?
6. Look how Peter puts it in 1 Peter 2:²*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴As you come to Him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious in God's sight, ⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* What do you see?
7. What is the milk of which Peter is speaking? What is its source?
8. How do you come to Him? How are we like living stones?
9. What sacrifices do we offer?
10. What does God do in and for us when we're together, that He could not do for us individually?

Examine this prophetic word Mark spoke: "God's plan was never individual transformation. We will transform individually, but this was always about family formation. It was always about what God wanted to do in the spiritual family."

1. Explain what he means.
2. What does God want to do in the spiritual family?
3. What does a family produce?
4. What do the offspring then produce?
5. The US Constitution was written in part, "To secure the blessings of liberty unto our posterity." Again, what does a family produce?
6. What is our obligation of stewardship to the next generation? Explain how important this relationship is.
7. Mark claims Jesus called the first disciples to do life together with him. Explain.
8. What do you gain when you do join this spiritual family?
9. How many fathers do you gain? How many mothers? How many brothers and sisters?
10. What is the role and obligation with and toward each? What does a father owe his son or daughter?
11. What does the son or daughter owe his father or mother?
12. Pastor says, "Family means that you don't have to do life alone." Explain.

13. Look at what Paul tells the Corinthians in I Corinthians 12:²⁴...*But God has composed the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its members should have mutual concern for one another. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.* What is each member's obligation to the rest of the body in Paul's illustration?
14. Who is careful to honor the less honorable? Explain.
15. Have you ever noticed this principle?
16. Pastor says, "This is not poetic language. This is a practical picture of how we are meant to live." Explain.
17. Look at Galatians 6:¹*Brothers, if someone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him with a spirit of gentleness. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ²Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.* According to this exhortation, how are we meant to live?
18. Put what Paul is showing the Corinthians and the Galatians in your own words?
19. Is it possible to live this way without a spiritual family? Explain.
20. Is it possible to carry someone else's burden if there is no one else around? Explain.
21. Pastor Mark asks, "Why did God design it this way?" Take a moment to answer.
22. What was God's original design?
23. What brought on the original failure in that original relationship?

Steps to benefitting from this relationship:

- ✠ Realize we grow best when living in a community.
 - Have you ever been part of a recovery program? How did community help?
 - What part did isolation play in the breakdown?
 - Look at 1 John 1:⁶*If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.* What destroys relationship?
 - What restores relationship?
 - How does one "walk in the light?" Practically, what does one do?
 - What does one not do when walking in the light?
 - What part does isolation play in this? What part does healthy fellowship play?
 - Pastor says, "We grow when someone challenges us, encourages us, corrects us." Look at what Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 14:¹*Earnestly pursue love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. ²For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification, encouragement, and comfort.* Explain why we would desire to prophesy.
 - In your own words, what does our prophesying contribute to a relationship?
 - How does saying or hearing the right thing at the right time help us to grow?
 - Why are we urged to strongly desire to prophesy?
 - In this light, why does Paul say this in 1 Thessalonians 5:¹⁹*Do not extinguish the Spirit. ²⁰Do not treat prophecies with contempt, ²¹but test all things. Hold fast to what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil?"*
 - Why are we urged to be quick to listen and slow to speak?

- Do you ever have problems hearing correction? What happens?
- ✚ Realize that we were never meant to carry the weight of life alone.
 - No burden can be carried when its existence is not known. Explain.
 - Pastor suggests carrying each other's burdens begins with prayer concerning the burdens. What does that involve?
 - What is necessary for this to happen?
- ✚ Realize discipleship happens in community.
 - Explain. Use the first disciples in your explanation.
 - What did they gain in community?
 - How does encouragement precede growth?
 - What encourages you most?
 - Is there a difference between encouragement and affirmation?
 - If encouragement comes in the middle of the task, and affirmation comes from a job well done, do you have a preference?
 - Is it possible to attend church and not get formed in the way God wants us to be formed? What is missing?
- ✚ Realize that our struggles in community must be examined. Look at this list and discuss it.
 - Business prevents us from entering in. We fill our lives with everything except intentional relationships. Pastor says, "We always make time for what we truly value."
 - The enemy has made us believe that we do not need community.
- ✚ Realize that fear of vulnerability is an obstacle.
 - Know to what degree being vulnerable makes you uncomfortable.
 - Look at Proverbs 29: *25The fear of man is a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is set securely on high.* What do you see?
 - Review what Jesus says about judging in Matthew 7: *4How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while there is still a beam in your own eye? 5You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.* Is it wrong to judge? Is there a speck in your brother's eye?
 - What is the first step in removing the speck in another's eye?
 - What does this have to do with community?
 - Is it healthy to pretend there is no speck?
 - Is it healthy to pretend you have no beam? Do you have a testimony?
 - What helps you to see clearly?
- ✚ Realize that past hurts act as an obstacle.
 - Do you have a testimony?
 - Pastor's list: You were overlooked. You were disappointed. You were hurt. Add to the list. What helped?
 - Pastor says, "We have to press into healthy relationships. The enemy wants to sabotage the effort. He wants us vulnerable, but he can have no foothold in your pursuit." Explain.
 - Robbie Dawkins, a famous world evangelist known for wearing "Jesus is God" t-shirts in downtown Kabul, says faith is often spelled R-I-S-K. Explain.

- Relate one biblical narrative you can think of where the faith of a man/woman of God was shown in the risk taken. What was God's response?
- Review the risks taken in Hebrews 11. What was the result of each?
- ✚ Realize that the NE individualist mindset, where "I don't need anyone" is the mantra, becomes an obstacle.
 - Why do we need each other? (Quick review.)
 - Pastor says, "In the kingdom of God, He has established dependence." Explain.
 - He continues, "The kingdom says, 'We need others. They need you.'" Looking at Paul's and Peter's illustration of the body/building, above, explain how that works.

Look at how this works practically in Acts 2:⁴⁶*With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart,* ⁴⁷*praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

1. What do you see in these verses?
2. Why didn't the apostles isolate themselves? They were the cool ones. Explain.
3. What about kids? How did families with children cope?
4. What about families? How did families cope?
5. What about jobs? How did people with jobs cope? What changed?
6. What about ____? (Fill in the blank with your favorite excuses.)
7. Best guess: How long did this behavior continue in the early church?
8. What evidence do you have, if any?
9. How much extra time do you have in your own life?
10. Can you just drift into this Acts 2 lifestyle? Explain.

✚ **You were not meant to sit next to somebody. You were designed to be in each other's lives.**

Pastor says, "There are people here who are longing to be known. The answer is not more events. The answer is deeper relationships. This relationship is found when we say, 'Yes,' to being part of God's family."

1. Respond.
2. What does this idea solve?
3. What does it offer you that's new?

Take the time to pray.

Follow up application:

1. Use the **Soap study below** to pursue your own understanding.
 2. Write down to what degree being vulnerable makes you uncomfortable. What can help?
 3. Look for one biblical story where the man/woman of God took a risk. State how that encourages you in your walk.
 4. Ask, "Who actually knows me? Whose life am I actually in?" Write down your answer, and the next steps that come to you. Take the first step.
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For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Ephesians 2:19-22

Tuesday: 1 Peter 2:2-5

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 12:24-26

Thursday: Galatians 6:1-2

Friday: 1 John 1:6-7

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 14:1-3

Sunday: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.