

**WELCOME: (15 minutes)**

Describe your affinity for water. Which do you like best?

1. Swimming in a lake or ocean.
2. Swimming laps in a swimming pool.
3. Sun-tanning on a beach BESIDE the water.
4. Soaking in a hot-tub.

**WORSHIP: (15 minutes)**

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the majesty of God.

**WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)**

Read **John 5:1-9**. The fifth chapter of John begins a new section of the gospel...the development of opposition to the Lord Jesus and His response to it. No one joyously responds to the man's healing...the man doesn't even respond with joy. It is significant for us to note Jesus involvement with the man of John 5:1-9...

*\*Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem (v 1)...no mention of his disciples...He is on a mission...he has an appointment at the Bethesda pool. Sometimes we forget how much Jesus forfeited when he became a human...He was not omnipresent...He was not omnipotent...He was not omniscient. He was dependent on the promptings of the Spirit of God and acts as our example of responding to the inner leading of the Holy Spirit.*

*\*Here a great number of disabled people used to lie (v 3)...in our self-sufficient, bootstrap, you can do anything you set your mind to, world we have bought into the philosophy that *God helps those who help themselves*. In fact, we sometimes think that the statement is biblical. In this text, we see that God helps the helpless. These were the *blind, the lame, the paralyzed*. The word, *disabled*, is also translated...*without strength, feeble, in a state where it was impossible to do anything for yourself*.*

*\*One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years (v 5)...After awhile friends get discouraged with helping you...they lose patience when your condition becomes chronic...they run out of energy and compassion when nothing happens. Perhaps his family dropped him off each day and picked him up at the end of the day...38 years is a long, long time.*

*\*When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him (v 6)...**Jesus noticed him...Jesus talked to him...Jesus took the initiative**. No one saw Him for who He was...they were blind. No one rose to meet Him...they were lame. No one made any effort to reach out to Him...they were paralyzed. But Jesus took the initiative to contact him, to talk to him, to know him.*

**George Hunter** suggests that, all too often, **evangelism is...an unrequested and un-negotiated monologue, wherein the evangelizer controls the process, he is not generally interested in nor open to the other person and gives the other no credit for knowing, believing, or having experienced anything worthwhile**...but we are called to be like Jesus.

*\*Do you want to get well? (v 6) Romans 5:6 says...You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly...When we were in a state where we*

found it impossible to do anything for ourselves spiritually, Jesus Christ died and provided a way. But Jesus wanted to know if he recognized his powerlessness and wanted to be well.

*\*Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me (v 7)...He was focused on the usual way of finding healing...the moving of the water. He focuses on explaining why he could never make it to the pool.*

*\*Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." (v 8)...What is the hardest thing for a paralyzed person to do?...get up, pick up his mat and walk. Jesus was asking for faith... Hebrews 11:1---*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see...**

A solution for powerlessness demands faith. Jesus, I believe that you can do what you say you can do. Jesus told a paralyzed man to get up, pick up his mat and walk. AND HE DID! **When faith touches powerlessness there is transformation.**

**Conclusion:** Our part in becoming like Jesus is encountering people...knowing them, talking with them, finding out what the needs of their lives are, telling them what Jesus can do. Only the Father can draw them...only the Spirit of God can give them faith to believe.

*I still believe deeply that our few years on this earth are part of a much larger event that stretches out beyond the boundaries of our birth and death. I think of it as a mission into time, a mission that is very exhilarating, and even exciting, mostly because the One who sent me on the mission is waiting for me to come home and tell the story of what I have learned*  
*LIFE OF THE BELOVED...Henri Nouwen...180*

### **Word Application Questions:**

1. In what ways would you identify yourself with the disabled people beside the pool in Bethesda (vs 3)? In what ways are you blind, lame or paralyzed- and in need of Jesus' healing?
2. Consider Jesus' words in vs. 5 "Do you want to get well?" In what ways do you recognize your own powerlessness? What are you powerless to do for yourself?
3. Read again the quote from George Hunter above. Does this describe your own experience or understanding of evangelism? Tell the stories...
4. Read the conclusion above. What do you see in this encounter of Jesus that is worth imitating in your encounters with people?
5. Read Henri Noewen's quote above. Do you agree with his perspective?
6. If you had one year left in your "mission into time" what would you focus on?

### **WITNESS: (15 minutes)**

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolded those we reach into the Life Group.