

# WEEK 2: YOU BELONG

## Jesus Calls Peter

*“At once they left their nets and followed him.” – Matthew 4:20*

**Matthew 4:18-22, Luke 5:1-11, Mark 1:16-20**

Have you ever been bullied? Have you ever been a bully? There are few things more heartbreaking than seeing how cruel children can be to each other. And we all know that bullying is not limited to children. You don't have to look far for examples of adults being intimidating, threatening, or just plain mean to each other. What would make someone want to be cruel to another human being? Some experts believe that a bully's behavior is motivated at least partly by their own desperate need to belong.

God created us with this need. We weren't made to live lives of isolation. We were made for connection. With so much time spent at home and away from family and friends this last year, I think we all realized how much we need to belong.

Jesus knew we have this inner need for belonging. He created his own “family,” asking ordinary people like fishermen and tax collectors to follow him and share life with him during his time on Earth. People like Simon Peter, James, and John were willing to leave what they were doing and immediately join Jesus in his ministry. They walked with him, shared meals with him, and learned from him. They must have laughed and cried with him.

But why were they so eager to drop their nets and follow him? He gave them a place to belong. He offers that same place to us when we make the decision to follow him, but he also shows us what it means to belong every day in the form of our families, friends, and churches. We were made to belong, to be a part of God's family.

### **QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:**

1. What groups do you belong to? What does it feel like to know you have places where you belong?
2. When have you experienced the sense of not belonging or being left out? How did that feel?
3. Are you feeling isolated now? Who is a safe person in your life who you can reach out to?
4. Who in your life might be feeling isolated or lonely? Reach out to them and remind them that they belong and are an important part of God's family.