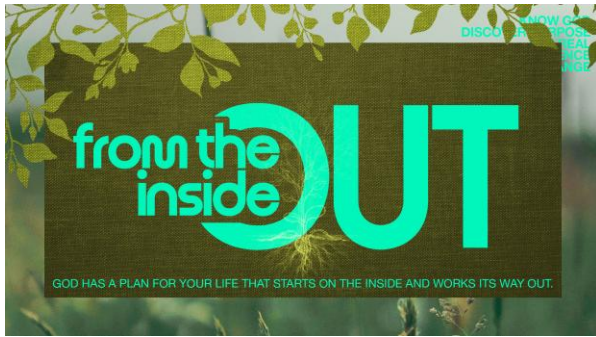




STUDY GUIDE: September 6, 2026
Message Series: From the Inside Out
Message Title: Open Your Hands
Teaching Pastor: Elijah Schiarelli

Warm-Up / Icebreaker (10 min.)

Where Do You Fit?" Everyone share:

1. How many siblings do you have?
2. Where do you fall in the birth order? (Oldest, middle, youngest, only child, etc.)
3. What is one thing about your birth order that fits your personality?

Pray:

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating us for relationship—with You and with one another. Thank You for the people You place in our lives who help us see what we cannot always see on our own. Help us build the kind of community that is authentic, accountable, intimate, and centered on becoming more like Jesus. We trust that You are at work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Get Started: (30 min.)

- Think about a time when you were trying to figure something out on your own and eventually realized you needed someone else's help. What happened, and what made it difficult—or easy—to ask for help?
- Pastor Elijah described Helen Keller's childhood as a picture of someone who had so much happening **inside** of her but struggled to bring it **outside** because she couldn't navigate the world alone. How does her story connect to our own experience of following Jesus?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 & Romans 12:2.

- Both passages describe the transformation that happens as we follow Jesus. What are some ways you have seen God changing you "on the inside"?

Pastor Elijah connected this week's purpose, **Get Real**, to the first two purposes of **Know God** and **Discover Purpose**. As we grow in our relationship with God and discover how He has created us, we eventually need other people to help us live out that transformation.

Reflect and Commit: (40 min.)

"Getting real is about small, authentic, accountable, and intimate community, all aimed at a common goal: a life that honors God." -Pastor Elijah Schiarelli

Small — Real community requires a small enough group of people that we can actually know one another.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–10, Mark 3:13–19 & Mark 9:2.

- Why do you think Jesus invested so deeply in small groups, his group of 12 disciples and an even smaller group of 3, even though He had many other followers?

Authentic —being honest about what is really happening inside of us—even when that means admitting we may be wrong.

Read James 5:16.

- Why can being honest about what is really happening inside of us be difficult? What helps create a group where people feel safe enough to be real?
- Why do you think we sometimes try to hide or minimize when we've gotten something wrong? What difference can it make when we're honest about it?

Accountable — Authenticity becomes meaningful when it is followed by action. Healthy community lovingly helps us follow through on the things we say we want to do.

Read Proverbs 27:6.

- What do you think makes it easier for people to receive accountability from others? What would help you feel comfortable being honest with others and having them encourage you to follow through?

Intimate — When a community is small, authentic, and accountable, it creates the space for genuine intimacy. These are people who know you, care about you, and genuinely want to see you become who God created you to be.

- What do you think is the difference between being in a group and actually belonging to a group?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11 & Proverbs 13:20.

- What qualities would you look for in a friend who helps you grow in your faith?

Pastor Elijah emphasized that finding a **community that gets real will never happen by accident**. Small Groups are designed to create the space where people can know one another, encourage one another, challenge one another, and help one another become more like Jesus.

Helen Keller had to open her hand before Anne Sullivan could teach her what she could not yet understand. In the same way, we have to be willing to open our hands—to receive help, wisdom, encouragement, correction, and friendship.

"You must go get it, foster it, and protect it. All of that starts...by opening your hands." Pastor Elijah Schiarelli

Gather Prayer Requests: (5–10 min.)

Pray:

Father, thank You for reminding us that we were never meant to walk through life alone. Thank You for the people You have placed around us who can encourage us, challenge us, correct us, and help us become more like Jesus. Give us the courage to open our hands and let go of the things that keep us from authentic community. Help us find people with whom we can be honest, accountable, and vulnerable. Give us humility to receive wise counsel and courage to lovingly offer it to others. Help us become the kind of community that truly gets real and points one another toward You. Use our relationships to continue the transformation You have begun inside of us and help us live out Your good and perfect plan together. In Jesus' name, Amen.