

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of March 3, 2019

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.

LEADER NOTES

Things to Remember:

- Drinks when people arrive
- *Spring Sign-Ups:* Mar 23 – 31
- *Spring Quarter:* Apr 1 – Jun 1

Goals for the Evening:

- FINALIZE Spring Quarter plans
- Continue to build relationships
- Discuss the study questions
- Pray together

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO FINALIZE PLANS FOR THE SPRING QUARTER AT YOUR MEETING THIS WEEK. Confirm any changes to your group or indicate "NO CHANGES" when you submit your attendance. Please let us know this information ASAP. Thank you!

⇒ DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Remember, you don't need to answer every question!
- Choose the questions best suited to your group.
- Listen to the Audio/Podcast version of the Leader Guide for more discussion suggestions.

⇒ PRAYER

- Take prayer requests
- If you haven't divided into male/female groups already, you may want to do so for prayer.

LEADER INFO

⇒ MID-QUARTER TRAINING

Make sure you attend the Mid-Quarter Training session for Leaders and Hosts (Vista Campus based-groups only). Click the link to RSVP: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/mid-quarter-training

Arise – Mar 19
Military – Mar 17

Senior Adults – Mar 11
Singles – Mar 16

Young Families – Mar 16 & 17
Young Marrieds – Mar 16 & 17

⇒ ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online at northcoastchurch.com/attendance. If you're not sure how to post attendance, you can check out the guide here: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance

Find all of our leader resources online: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools

Mark Reading Challenge

- Read Mark in one sitting (takes about 1-2 hours)
- One chapter per day – read through Mark twice in a month
- Bible Apps w/ Text or Audio – Bible Gateway App or The Bible App by YouVersion

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1

Have you ever been around someone whose zeal has gone bad (they are consistently judgmental or legalistic)? What was it like being around them and how did they impact their family and friends?

Note: Remind people to not share any names.

2

Larry listed four ways that zeal can go bad. Which of the four would be the easiest for you to fall into?

Great question to have everyone answer.

Additional Question: Which one is the one you struggle with the least?

Additional "My Story" Questions:

- *Larry talked about not using the Bible as binoculars to judge what other people are doing. In what area would it be the easiest for you to judge people?*
- *Larry talked about using the Bible as a mirror to examine ourselves. Can you think of a time when you were reading the Bible or listening to a sermon and God used it to bring to your attention something that you needed to deal with?*
- *Can you think of any personal preferences that you have to be careful of putting on others, making them be biblical principles?*
- *When you were young, where did the family you grew up in tend to land on the continuum below? How does this compare with your current family?*

Legalism (Strict boundaries) ←————→ Excess Liberty (No boundaries)

DIGGING DEEPER

1

This weekend Larry mentioned that it's okay to have personal "extra fences" for ourselves, but we need to be careful not to expect others to live by those same rules. In this week's study questions, we're going to do another circle/highlight/underline study on how to address the kinds of issues that often divide Christians.

1. **Circle** / **highlight** any words or phrases that catch your attention.
2. **Underline** the verse you see as most important to remember.
3. **Put an X** next to anything that confuses you.

Romans 14:1-23

14 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God."

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Note: For further context on the whole issue of eating meat, see [1 Corinthians 8](#). In that passage Paul talks about how to address the issue of people wanting to eat meat that was sacrificed to idols and then sold in the local butcher shop.

What issues is the church in Rome dealing with that are causing dissention?

Additional Question: What do you notice about how these issues were affecting the church and its members?

What are some suggestions Paul has for how the Roman church could work through the issues so unity can be restored?

Possible Answers:

- Accept all Christians regardless of their spiritual maturity.
- Never use your freedom to judge other believers.
- Always sacrifice your freedom for the faith of others.

Case Study

Jason is about to watch an R-rated movie, or order an alcoholic drink, or _____ (fill in your own gray area). At that moment, a friend who is a fellow believer shows up unexpectedly. What are some things Jason would be wise to take into consideration if his friend is:

- a. A person who has struggled with this area in the past?
or
- b. A person who doesn't struggle with this area, but has strong opinions about others not being involved in it?

In a sermon a number of years ago, Chris Brown talked about the main characters in Romans 14. Understanding these will help you come up with answers to the Case Study. He identified the characters as:

The Strong Christian: A person who is mature enough to be able to make good decisions about participating in gray areas and feels the freedom to participate in any of them if he wants to.

The Truly Weaker Brother: A person who may be tempted to fall back into a particular activity that is a sin for them if they see another Christian doing it.

The Professional Weaker Brother: The person who doesn't want anyone to ever do this activity because they think it is wrong. They have never had a problem with whatever activity is under debate so there isn't any chance they will stumble.

And one character who isn't in the chapter, but often in conversations about gray areas is the:

The Phantom Weaker Brother: A mythical person who the Professional Weaker Brother brings into a conversation as a way to convince others they shouldn't participate in a gray area.

Additional Questions:

- Are there any areas where you realize you're a weaker brother/sister?
- How do the following verses help reinforce the importance of thinking through setting up personal extra fences for your own life?

James 4:17 – ¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Philippians 4:8-9 – ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

2 Timothy 2:22 – ²² Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

2

We heard this weekend that the Sabbath command is the only one of the 10 Commandments not repeated in the New Testament. While the command isn't repeated, the concept of building regular times of rest and renewal into our busy lives is found throughout the Bible. What can we learn in the following passages about our need for rest and how God can work in us when we make time for it?

Additional Question: Did any of you grow up in a family that had special rules for what you could or couldn't do on Sunday?

Isaiah 40:28-31

²⁸ Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

²⁹ He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.

³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;

³¹ but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

God doesn't tire and he provides energy to us if we will hope in him.

Additional Question: What does it look like to hope in the Lord?

Mark 6:30-31 – ³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Jesus recognized the need of the disciples for rest but unfortunately if you keep reading you find that they didn't actually get any rest because of the crowds.

Matthew 11:28-30 – ²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Partnering with Jesus is the only way to do the Christian life in a way that is restful.

Additional Question: How do we go about yoking ourselves to Jesus?

What are the biggest challenges you face in creating enough margin in your life to allow you to rest and renew?

Additional Questions:

- How important is rest and renewal to you?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt you had a good balance of rest and renewal?
- How much attention did your family pay towards not doing things on Sundays when you were growing up?

TAKING IT HOME

In light of this weekend's sermon and the warning about zeal going bad, take some time to think through your answers to the questions below (you won't be asked to share your answers in your group).

We told them they wouldn't have to share their answers so please don't ask this question in your group time.

Do I have a tendency to...

...add extra rules for other people to live by?

...use the Bible as binoculars instead of as a mirror?

...major on minors?

...love rules and ideas more than people?

Can you think of any personal “extra fences” you need to consider adding to your life?

This is a good question to wait to answer until you split up into men’s and women’s groups for your prayer time.

Additional Question: Are there any personal extra fences you’ve found helpful in your life?

PRAYER REQUESTS



How Zeal Goes Bad

TWO SABBATH STORIES

Mark 2:23-3:6

THE BACKSTORY

From Bad to Worse

WHAT WENT WRONG?

How Does Well-Intended Zeal Go Bad?

- (1) We start adding extra **RULES** to God’s **RULES**.
Proverbs 30:5-6/ Matthew 15:7-9/ Colossians 2:20-23/ Romans 14:1-5

A QUICK SABBATH SIDEBAR

Matthew 5:17-18/ John 19:30/ Matthew 27:50-51

- (2) We start using the Bible as **BINOCULARS**
instead of a **MIRROR**.
Matthew 7:2-5/ Romans 2:1-4/ James 1:23-25

- (3) We **MAJOR** on **MINORS**.
1 Corinthians 11:17-19/ 1 Timothy 1:3-7

- (4) We start to love **RULES** and **IDEAS** more than **PEOPLE**.
Mark 2:27 & 3:4-5/ 1 Corinthians 8:1-3/ Matthew 23:1-4 & 23-24/ Revelation 2:1-7