

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of April 28, 2019

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

LEADER NOTES

THE MEETING

⇒ **Group Connection / Discussion Reminder:** Continue to be aware of how the time in your group is being used and that you're allowing time to connect and pray for one another. If you spend most of the meeting one week answering the questions, make sure you allow plenty of time to connect and pray the following week. If you haven't done so lately, and you're a male / female group, make sure you're getting time to break into women-only / men-only groups to take prayer requests. Sharing often times goes up when you do this.

⇒ **Anyone needing some extra attention in your group?** Just a quick reminder, if someone shares something, then a text, phone call, or a note letting them know that you're thinking about them later that week can be a big encouragement.

LEADER INFO

⇒ **Leadercast is back!** Be a part of an extraordinary event that will make you an even better leader. It is the largest, one-day simulcast leadership event on the planet, with more than 100,000 current visionaries and future world-changers attending each year. **As a Life Group Leader or Host, we'd like to honor you and provide you with a special ticket rate. Utilize the code LGLeader to take advantage of special pricing at just \$69.**

To register, visit: northcoastchurch.com/leadercast

Date: Friday, May 10

Time: 8am-2:30pm

Location: The Edge, Vista Campus

Simulcast Speakers: Andy Stanley, Patrick Lencioni, Juliet Funt, Marcus Sameulsson, and many more.

⇒ 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

MY STORY

1 We saw this weekend the people in Jesus' hometown used various words to describe him. Write down as many words as you can think of that you would have used and/or still use, to describe Jesus (including before you became a Christian).

Good question to have everyone answer. Have some fun with it. You may want to have them give answers in the form of a timeline – how they viewed him as a pre-Christian or young child and how it changed or even matured.

Additional Questions: Three words that are used to describe Jesus are prophet (our teacher), priest (redeems and intercedes for us) and King (our ruler). Is there one aspect you focus on more than the others? Have you seen it change at different points in your life? Can you think of any concerns by not being aware of one of these aspects of who Jesus is?

2

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?

DIGGING DEEPER

As you know, we have been hitting the topic of real faith pretty hard over the last two weeks in both our weekend teaching and our Life Group Study Questions. This week, we bring it all home by looking at one of Jesus' most extensive teachings in Matthew 7:13-27 on the type of faith that makes us children of God.

Before we jump into the questions, take a couple of minutes and read this entire passage to soak in what Jesus is trying to tell the crowd about faith.

- **Circle** / **highlight** any words or phrases that catch your attention.
- **Underline** the verse(s) you see as most important for you to remember.

Discussion Tip: Take some time to hear what everyone highlighted or circled. You may want to come back to the verses they feel are most important and have them share that at the end.

Matthew 7:13-27

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

¹⁵ "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Questions about the passage:

1 We heard this weekend that as followers of Jesus we will experience life change when we put our faith in Jesus by denying our will and realigning it with God's. Verses 15-20 tell us we'll know our faith by our good fruit. As a follower of Jesus, what are some examples of how God has grown and/or changed you? (Galatians 5:19-23 & Romans 12:9-21 give some examples of how the Spirit may have worked, or is working in your life).

Discussion Suggestion: This is a good question to have everyone respond to or potentially to end your meeting with. If so, you may want to answer either of the following questions instead of starting with this one. Also remember that having everyone share their response may take some time.

Note about the Question: This question is not just about the change you make when you initially commit to following Jesus, but also the life change that happens as you follow Jesus. Asking how God has changed you is not always an easy question to answer because a person may not recognize how they have changed or grown, even though they may have. The verses may help people identify how God is working in them. If they can't identify anything it does not mean they're not a follower of Christ. The key question is, have they put God in charge; submitting to his will over their own lives, realizing their need for forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Some may also wonder if they sometimes fail to obey, that it means they are not fully committed. The question is, "are they fully committed," not "do they fail." [Romans 7](#) speaks of Paul's dilemma of sinning even though it isn't what he wants to do. [Romans 8](#) is a good follow-up.

Additional Questions: Before we all share our answers to this, did anyone find answering this question challenging, at least at first? How did reading the verses help?

Galatians 5:19-23 – ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Romans 12:9-21 – ⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but

leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

2

The Bible clearly teaches that one day we will have a divine appointment before the Almighty God. Verses 21-23 are some of the strongest statements ever made by Jesus about the day we meet him. For that reason, let's spend some time wrestling with the claims of the crowd, and the response Jesus gives us that defines who gets into heaven and who doesn't.

In your own words, what is the crowd basing their relationship with Christ on?

They were doing good works, miracles and casting out demons in God's name they felt that it made them worthy. But they were still not obeying God's will.

Additional Scripture: Read this to see what real faith looks like – [Hebrews 11:1-6](#)

How would you tell someone else about the way Jesus defines real faith and Christianity in verse 21?

"In the end, there is one basis for salvation; it isn't mere verbal confession, not "spiritual works," but knowing Jesus and being known by Him. It is our connection to Him – by the gift of faith that He gives to us – that secures our salvation. Connected to Jesus we are secure; without connection to Him all the miracles and great works prove nothing. – Guzik

3

Jesus gives us one last story to sum up all that we have been learning over the last few weeks about faith in verses 24-27. Since this is so important to our own understanding of real faith, what three to five bullet points would you use if you had to teach this to your Life Group as a Bible study?

Everyone may not have answers to this question, but it's definitely an interesting way to get people talking about the passage and topic. Here are a few points:

- The strength of our foundation may look strong, but until time passes and the storm comes, then the firmness of the foundation will be revealed.*
- Like a wise builder, we need to test to see how strong our foundation is and maintain it.*
- To build strength we need to put into action that which God has called you to.*
- Who I am with those I'm closest to? A great check point and revealer of what I stand on.*

TAKING IT HOME

If you haven't divided into men only / women only groups for a while it's recommended you do this week.

1 Can you think of any ways in which the last few weeks have stretched, added to or redefined your personal understanding of faith?

2 As you look at your own life, are there any areas where you've allowed tradition or man-made rules to give you a false sense of surrender?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Community Service is dedicated to being the hands and feet of Jesus and showing God's love in tangible ways through service to the community. There are many options for you to serve. For ideas, check out NorthCoastCommunityService.org



NORTH COAST CHURCH | LIFE GROUPS

The *HUGE* Difference Between Belief & Faith

How the crowd ruined homecoming:

Mark 6:1-6

The crowd at home knew Jesus':

- ✓ **Abilities**
- ✓ **Wisdom**
- ✓ **Miracles**
- ✓ **Story**

The crowd at home was **offended** by what Jesus **demanded**.

Separating faith and belief:

Matthew 7:13-29, James 2:14-26, Hebrews 11:6, Romans 10:17, Romans 10:9-11
Surrender: Matthew 16:24-26, 26:36-46, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 2:20, Romans 7-8

- ▶ There is a huge difference between a Christ **follower** and a Christ **believer**.
- ▶ Belief is what we **know**, faith is how we **live**.
- ▶ It is impossible to be a **Christian** without experiencing a life **change**.
- ▶ Lordship is a complete surrender of **our will** to **God's will**.