

# LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of February 6, 2022

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

## LEADER NOTES

### Goals for the Meeting:

- Continue to build relationships.
- Pray together.
- Finalize plans for your social.
- Talk about service project options.

## MEETING NOTES

### ⇒ FINALIZE PLANS FOR YOUR SOCIAL & SERVICE PROJECT

Confirm with your group what service project you would like to do. Check our website for some options:

[northcoastcommunityservice.org](http://northcoastcommunityservice.org).

### SOCIAL OPTIONS

Online Social Ideas: <https://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/group-socials/>

In-person Social Ideas: <https://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/suggestions-for-socials/>

### ⇒ DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Remember you don't have to answer every question!
- Choose questions best suited to your group.
- Listen to the [Audio Guide/Podcast](#) for more discussion suggestions.
- ***Hear from everyone every time you meet!***

### ⇒ PRAYER

- Take prayer requests.
- If you haven't divided into male/female groups already, you may want to do so for the "Taking it Home" section and prayer.

### ⇒ ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online at [northcoastchurch.com/attendance](http://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](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance)

Find all of our leader resources online: [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools)

## QUICK REVIEW

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

## MY STORY

1. Have you ever been given something valuable to borrow or take care of? How did you treat it knowing that it didn't belong to you?

**Additional Question** – *How did your treatment of something you borrowed or were asked to take care of differ from how you would treat the same item if you owned it?*

What similarities can you see to treating your life as God's and not yours?

2. Can you think of a time when you were going through a difficult time or facing a challenge and, instead of changing your circumstances, God used His Spirit to strengthen you and/or change your attitude towards your circumstances?

*Not everyone will have an answer to this question. This question builds off the sermon notes about how the Spirit works – more in us than outside of us and more to change us than to change our lives.*

### **Additional Questions:**

- *If the Spirit is more likely to work on us than on our circumstances, how might that influence how we pray?*
- *When you or others are going through a tough time, what is the usual focus of your prayers?*
- *Knowing that the Spirit wants to work more in us than in our circumstances, how might that change how we pray?*

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend we saw that the more we see this life as ours, the more we are going to defend it with jealousy and pride. We also saw that David clearly viewed it as God's kingdom and he was humbled just to play a role in it. In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells a parable about three servants who demonstrate how you act when you believe everything belongs to God. How would you contrast how the first two servants understood what their role was to that of the third servant?

**Additional Question** – *Why do you think the third servant acted differently than the first two?*

### **Matthew 25:14-30 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup> "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup> "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

<sup>21</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>22</sup> "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

<sup>23</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>24</sup> "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

<sup>26</sup> "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

<sup>28</sup> "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. <sup>29</sup> For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

What can we speculate about how each of the servants viewed the master given how they handled what he had entrusted to them?

**Discussion Note** – *In the case of the third servant, we don't have to speculate what he thought. We know exactly what he was thinking because he explained his thinking to the master when he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'* His understanding of the master directly impacted what he did with what the master had entrusted to him.

*The first two servants must have realized that the master expected them to invest what he had entrusted to them and that there would be a reward for doing that. They must have understood that the master was fair but also had high expectations.*

The fact that this is God's kingdom and not ours is *both* bad news for our natural, sinful desires *and* good news for our lives in Christ. What are some of the challenges or "bad news" we face because our lives are not our own? What are some of the benefits or "good news"?

**"Bad news"** – we aren't free to do whatever we want when we want to. There are boundaries we are supposed to stay within. And there are negative, natural consequences for not following God's rules.

**"Good news"** – there are built in positive, natural consequences for doing things God's way. We avoid much pain and suffering, and we experience the joy and peace that comes with obedience. We will also experience spiritual blessings and sometimes even material blessings.

When are you most tempted to treat your life as yours and not God's?

**Additional Question** – *When do you find it easiest to forget that your life is not yours, but God's?*

When are you most reminded to treat your life as God's and not yours?

**Additional Question** – What helps remind you that your life is God's and not your own?

Remembering whose kingdom it is has a lot to do with acknowledging that it is not about you. When are some situations you struggle with remembering it's not about you?

**Additional Questions:**

- When you're in one of those situations, what could help you remember that it's not about you?
- What have you done when you're in one of those situations to remind yourself that it's not about you?

Can you think of any examples of what it might look like to treat the significant areas of your life (job, marriage, singleness, children, relationships, home, finances, time, etc.) as God's and not yours?

**Discussion Note** – if your group members struggle to come up with an answer, pick one of the areas that is most applicable to your group and do a brainstorm on what they think it might look like to treat that area as God's and not yours?

Possible answer for the area of treating our children as God's and not ours: We could relax because we know it's God's job to watch over our children so we don't have to stand guard 24/7. We would see our parental role as preparing our children to love God and love others when they become adults. We would also realize that even God had rebellion in His family, so believing it is up to us to make sure our kids love Jesus is unrealistic. We can influence, but we can't guarantee that our children will turn out the way we want them to.

2. To be clear on the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives, let's turn to the teachings of Jesus at the Last Supper. Jesus spent the very last night of His freedom in the upper room preparing the disciples for the Holy Spirit and what it was going to be like to live with Him. As you read the following passages from that scene in the upper room, what do you notice about the role of the Holy Spirit and what He does for us?

**John 14:15-26 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

<sup>22</sup> Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. <sup>24</sup> Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> "All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**John 16:7-15 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>7</sup> But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> about sin, because people do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

<sup>12</sup> "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. <sup>13</sup> But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. <sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

What words or phrases in these verses speak to the idea that the Holy Spirit helps us handle "cursing" and "failure" and the trials of life, as Chris mentioned?

**Additional passage** – John 15:18-26

How might remembering the Holy Spirit is not just there for blessings but also to help us handle challenges affect how you pray?

**Discussion Note:** Since the last two sermons both focused on the Holy Spirit, you may want to spend some extra time exploring what it means to walk in the Spirit. Here are some additional questions to help you focus on that, plus a resource you can consult for additional input.

- What does it look like for us to allow the Spirit to do what He said He would do in our lives?
- How do we allow the Spirit to work in and through us?
- What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit?”
- What have you found that is helpful for allowing the Spirit to work on your inner life?
- What does it look like to rely on God’s power to live the Christian life rather than our own power?
- *What does it look like in a practical sense to experience the Holy Spirit’s power to live the Christian life?*
- *Why don’t we more consistently tap into God’s power to help us live the Christian life?*
- *What are some misconceptions people have about the Spirit-filled life?*
- *What’s been your experience or understanding of what the Spirit-filled life entails?*
- *How has your understanding of the Spirit-filled life changed over the years?*

**Additional Verse:** In Ephesians 5:18, it talks about being “filled with the Spirit.” The verse brings together two very different experiences – getting drunk and being filled with the Spirit. In what ways does getting drunk relate to being filled with the Spirit? When a person is drunk, they are being controlled by something outside themselves. Same with the filling of the Spirit. When you are drunk you say and do things you normally wouldn’t do (usually things you later regret or are embarrassed by). Same with being filled with the Spirit, only the things you do under the influence of the Spirit are things you want to remember.

**Note:** the word for “be filled” in Greek refers to an ongoing process, not a one-time event. So, it literally means “be continually filled with the Spirit.”

**Resource:** To read more about the Spirit-filled life, go to <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/the-spirit-filled-life.html>

## TAKING IT HOME

Which point from this weekend’s message or Life Group study is most important for you to remember?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**Discussion Note:** We recommend that if your group is coed, that you split into men’s only and women’s only groups for prayer on a regular basis. This allows you to pray for additional requests that may not come up in the main meeting. If you are meeting virtually, you can use the breakout rooms to accomplish this split.

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### COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Looking to serve with your Life Group? To check out all your options, go to [NorthCoastCommunityService.org](http://NorthCoastCommunityService.org)