

TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

***A SEVEN-WEEK GROUP STUDY
THROUGH “THE LORD’S PRAYER”***



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Shepherd Church

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INTRODUCTION



TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY

Dear Life Group Members,

WHY SHOULD I BE IN THIS GROUP?

Life Groups are designed to help you experience the life God has for you by helping you **CONNECT** with other believers, helping you **GROW** to be more like Christ, and making an **IMPACT** with the gospel.

Every time a group meets, they spend time connecting through building relationships, growing through a discussion-led Bible study, and making an impact by supporting each other through prayer and service. As a result, group members experience growth, belonging, and care. A Life Group is your chance to pursue healthy relationships and spiritual growth. You can't grow spiritually without connecting relationally.

5

HOW WILL THIS SERIES HELP ME?

In this 7-week Life Group series called "Teach Us How to Pray," we will be examining the Lord's Prayer. Each phrase from this prayer has divine direction that not only connects us with our holy God, but also allows Him to shape our hearts and minds to His will and image.

Through this study, we will learn that the Lord's Prayer can be understood as a pattern of how to pray. When we analyze this prayer, we realize that Jesus is very interested in our hearts when we pray. As we learn how to pray, we see that Jesus perfectly addresses all areas of life that must be developed to allow Him to mold and shape us into the people He created us to be.

WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THIS GROUP?

As you attend a weekend service and participate in this Life Group series, you will be equipped to live the life that God desires for you. Of course, the bottom line is, it comes down to you. Only you can share in your group, pray about the things God is teaching you, and take action to allow Jesus to work in you and through you. Enjoy the encouragement and challenges that God desires as His grace abounds in your Life Group.

Sincerely,

The Life Groups Team

USING THIS WORKBOOK

(Five Points to Help You Have a Great Life Group Experience!)

1 Notice in the Table of Contents there are three sections: (1) Sessions (2) Life Group Toolbox (3) Life Group Leaders. Familiarize yourself with the Appendix as some of them will be used in the weekly sessions.

2 If you are leading or co-leading a Life Group, the section for Life Group Leaders will give you some hard-learned experiences of others that will encourage you and help you avoid many common obstacles to effective small group leadership.

3 Use this workbook as a guide, not a straightjacket. If the group responds to the lesson in an unexpected, but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than one in a lesson, ask it. Take to heart the insights included in the Frequently Asked Questions pages and the Life Group Leaders section.

4 Enjoy your Life Group experience!

5 Read the “Outline for Each Session” below so that you understand how the sessions will flow.

OUTLINE FOR EACH SESSION

Every Life Group session is structured to reflect the values of Life Groups, which are: **Connect**, **Grow** and **Impact**. Therefore, the sessions are designed to help each group member participate and gain deeper insight into each topic by connecting with others, growing to be more like Christ, and impacting the community with the gospel.

A typical Life Group session will include the following:



CONNECT

7

The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family (a few people who really know you and share their lives with you). This section of each session is designed to allow group members to get to know each other. You can do this by using the icebreaker questions provided, or by asking light, easy-to-answer questions of your own that invite involvement from everyone.

As your group begins, use the Life Group Agreement, Life Group Calendar, and Life Group Community Project Worksheet to help your group see how everyone has a part in making a Life Group come to life. As the group develops intimacy, use the Prayer and Praise Report to keep the group connected.



DVD SESSION

Serving as a companion to the “Teach Us How to Pray” Study Guide is the “Teach Us How to Pray” video teaching. This DVD is designed to combine teaching segments from pastors and teachers along with leadership insights and personal stories of life change. Using the teaching video will add value to this seven-week series.



GROW

Here is where you will process the video teaching you heard and saw as a group. The focus won't be on accumulating information, but on how we should live in light of the Word of God. We want to help you apply the insights from Scripture practically, creatively, and from your heart, as well as your head. At the end of the day, allowing the timeless truths from God's Word to transform our lives in Christ is our greatest aim.

8



IMPACT

Impact is about putting what you learned into action. It is about walking the talk. This section is to help apply the insights and principles learned in the lesson. It is by this application that the lesson will have an impact in you as well as through you. We ask that all groups do some sort of community project together, some time during each series. Most groups have found that they have made significant contributions to society through this, and have made a lasting impact on people's lives for Jesus.

This is also a good place to have different group members close in prayer, even when the instructions don't specify. We encourage you to provide time, if the schedule allows, for people to reflect on the Prayer and Praise Report at the end of each session or take a little time to meet with a Spiritual Growth Partner.





SESSION ONE

OUR FATHER IN
HEAVEN

TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY



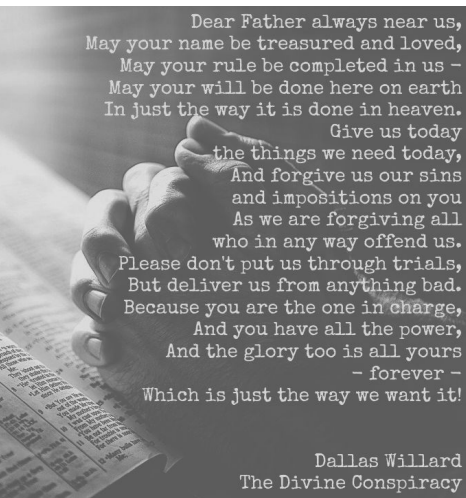
CONNECT

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Since this is your first time together (at least for this new series), take a few minutes to make sure everyone knows each other's names.

10

- As you begin, turn to the **“Life Group Roster” on page 77**. Take time to pass around your study guides and have everyone write down their contact information.
- Whether your group is new or ongoing, it's always important to reflect on and review your values together. **On page 78, there is a “Life Group Agreement”** with the values we've found most useful in sustaining healthy, balanced groups. Take a few minutes to go over the agreement together.
- One of the markers of a healthy and happy group is when everyone takes ownership of the group. A great way to help everyone be involved is to share in weekly responsibilities, whether it's taking turns praying for the group, providing snacks or drinks. You can turn to **page 79** where you will find the **“Life Group Calendar”** and blank group tasks.
- In this 7-week Life Group series called “Teach Us How to Pray,” we will be examining the Lord's Prayer. Through this study, we will learn that the Lord's Prayer can be understood as a pattern of how to pray. It gives us the fundamental components that can go into our prayer time as we converse with God. As we learn how to pray from Jesus' teaching, we see that He perfectly addresses all areas of life that must be developed in order to allow the Holy Spirit to mold and shape us into the men and women He created us to be. To start our series, and help break the ice for your group members, go around and answer one of the following questions:





Dear Father always near us,
May your name be treasured and loved,
May your rule be completed in us -
May your will be done here on earth
In just the way it is done in heaven.

Give us today
the things we need today,
And forgive us our sins
and impositions on you
As we are forgiving all
who in any way offend us.
Please don't put us through trials,
But deliver us from anything bad.
Because you are the one in charge,
And you have all the power,
And the glory too is all yours
- forever -
Which is just the way we want it!

Dallas Willard
The Divine Conspiracy

● Who was your favorite “TV dad” and why?

● What is your preferred communication (i.e., text, email, phone call, face to face, or other)?

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DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session One. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

12

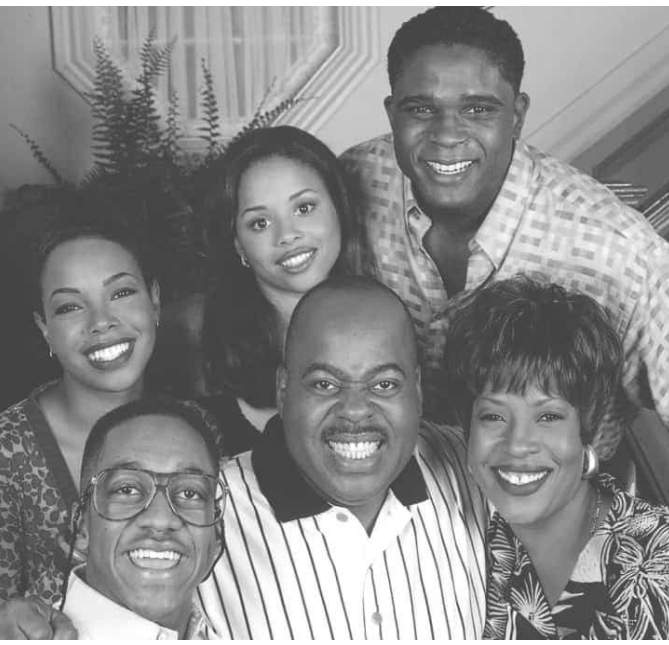
In the video, Dusty Frizzell discussed God being our Father in heaven. Go around your group and share what stood out to you from the video.

Read Matthew 6:9-13

1 Describe your relationship with your earthly father.

2 In the video, Dusty said that Jesus lived in a time “when religion pictured God as harsh and distant...” Many of us have those same pictures in our heads. How do your experiences with your earthly father affect your thoughts and emotions concerning your heavenly Father? Why do you think the relationship with our earthly fathers affects our spiritual development?





3 What thoughts or emotions come to you when you read the phrase “Our Father in heaven?”

13

Read Mark 14:32-36, Romans 8:15, and Galatians 4:6

4 In these passages, Jesus and Paul use the Aramaic term “Abba”, meaning “Father.” Together, the terms Abba and Father doubly emphasize the Fatherhood of God. In two different languages, we are assured of God’s care for His children. How does Jesus’ and Paul’s use of the term “Abba, Father” show an incredible familiarity and intimacy with God?

The Lord’s Prayer reminds us that God longs for His people to communicate with Him. Not just in church on Sunday, but everywhere we are and whatever we need.

—David Jeremiah

5 What kind of relationship does this familiarity and intimacy show? How does the phrase and intended relationship with “Our Father in heaven” challenge your perspective of God?



6 When you have that kind of familiarity and intimacy with “our Father in heaven,” how could that change the way you communicate (i.e., pray) with Him?

14

Read Matthew 23:9, John 1:12-13, John 20:17, Galatians 3:26-27, Ephesians 1:5, 1 John 3:1, and 1 John 4:4

7 What do these verses tell each of us about our relationship to God?

8 Describe your thoughts on the Father/child relationship between you and God (i.e., fearful, comforted, want to hide, want to celebrate ...?).

*It is God's
passionate
pursuit of us that
calls us to prayer.*

—Henri Nouwen

9 Knowing God is our loving Father, and we are His beloved children, how do you think He wants us to communicate/pray with Him? Why is it so important for us to understand that when we pray to God, we are praying to a loving Father? How might this change your attitude and approach to prayer?



Re-read Matthew 6:9

10 Why do you think Jesus started teaching His disciples how to pray with the phrase “Our Father in heaven?” How does this phrase orient our perspective to God when we pray?

11 What do you think is the purpose of praying/communicating to “our Father in heaven?” How do we benefit from prayer? How do you think God benefits from our prayer?

15

12 At the end of the video, Dusty asked us to think about prayer. He said God is good, God is safe, God is love, He is our Father ... He’s not just your Father, He’s our Father. He is the good and ever-present parent. Take some time right now with your group to pray through what you have discussed and learned through this study session.

Deeper Study

13 According to Dusty Frizzell in the video, what are some of the attributes of God that make Him accessible to us and someone we want to be near?



Read Luke 11:9-13

14 What does this passage say about making requests of God? What is His gift for His children? What do we know about this gift? How does this gift show God's love for us?

Read Matthew 19:14

16 **15** According to Jesus in this verse, to whom does the kingdom of heaven belong? Therefore, if we are God's children, what do you think Jesus meant when He said "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these?"

16 Describe "child-like" prayer. What is the difference between "child-like" prayer and the way that we often pray?





IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

17

- At the end of the video, Dusty Frizzell asked us to think about prayer. He asked us to think about the facts that God is good, God is safe, God is love, He is our Father ... He's not just your Father, He's our Father. He is the good and ever-present parent.

For some, this may be going against the grain of your experiences with your earthly father. It may be difficult to think of a kind, compassionate, loving heavenly Father because the character of your earthly father was far from these terms. You may need to express your hurt and anger about these things so that God can start the healing process with you, and teach you what it is to be loved by the perfect love of the perfect Father. Allow God to work through your Life Group family as you carry each other's burdens and love on one another.

Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

—John 1:12-13

Take some time right now with your group to pray through what you have learned and discussed in this week's study session. Pray that you seek God as a loving Father who wants the best for His beloved children! Lift up one another in prayer as you finish your group time.

- On your own this week, recite the following prayer once a day in order to grow closer to

your Father in heaven. You may want to take a picture of it to carry with you, to be reminded that He is in fact, a good and loving Father:

“Father God,
I come before You seeking your love.
Seeking Your goodness.
Seeking Your blessing.
You are good and ever present.
May I, as Your child, go to you for my heart's desires.
May I, as Your child, rest in the love You lavish and so freely give.
Thank you, Father, for Your presence, Your grace, Your love, and
Your kindness even when I sin.
Thank you, God. Amen.”

18

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.



PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

Prayer Requests:

19

Praise Reports:



SESSION TWO

HALLOWED BE
YOUR NAME

TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

- What was the “holy grail” of collectibles for you when you were growing up?
- Who stands out to you when you read the words “prayer warrior?”



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DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Two. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Last week, you were asked to pray and to think about prayer. Dusty Frizzell shared that God is good, God is safe, God is love, He is our Father ... He's not just your Father, He's our Father. He is the good and ever-present parent. Before you begin tonight, take some time to discuss your experiences in your communication/prayer with God.

Today we are going to talk about the holy name of God. Take a minute to discuss what you learned from Dusty in the video.



Read Matthew 6:9-13 (if possible, choose a different translation than what your group used last week)

1 What is hallowed/holiness? Describe hallowed/holiness in your own words.

2 Why do you think holiness is such an important aspect of God?

Read Exodus 20:7, Psalm 30:4, Psalm 77:13, John 14:14, Acts 3:6, and Revelation 4:8

3 What do these verses say about God and His name?

4 In Matthew 6:9, Jesus states that God's name is hallowed/holy. Why do you think Jesus felt it was important to teach us to pray starting with this phrase? How do you think He intended it to affect the way that we communicate with God?

5 What does it mean to you when you think of the intimate familiarity of our heavenly Father combined with His holy and mighty power?

Read Psalm 99

6 How does the psalmist in this passage describe the actions of our holy God?

7 According to Psalm 99:3, 5, & 9, what are some of the responses of God's followers? How can God's holiness affect our hearts to cause us to want to worship Him? How has your heart and life been affected by God's holy power?

*To be a Christian
without prayer is no
more possible than to be
alive without breathing.*

—Martin Luther

Read Leviticus 11:44, Galatians 5:13-18, 2 Timothy 2:21, and 1 Peter 1:13-16

8 According to these passages, what is the responsibility of a person who is following God?

9 According to these passages, what are some differences between followers of God and non-believers?

25

10 God is our Father, and He is familiar and loving, yet there is still a vast difference between God and us. Therefore, as holy children of God, how are we to approach our prayer/communication with God?

Read Ephesians 5:1-3 and Philippians 4:6-7

11 How do these passages describe the approach of a holy child before our Heavenly Father? What do these verses teach about a transformed heart during prayer?

12 How do we grow in maturity from approaching prayer/communication with our Holy God in this manner?

13 Take some time right now to pray with your group. Remember what you have learned during this discussion time. Maybe use the “breath prayer” that Dusty talked about at the end of the video lesson. “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God... may your name be lifted up in my life today.”

Deeper Study

26

Read Galatians 5:13-26

14 Compare and contrast a life submitted vs. a life that is not submitted to the Holy Spirit. Why do you think a life submitted to the Holy Spirit leads to a life of transformation and holiness?

15 How have you experienced your own transformation into holiness through the Holy Spirit as you have obediently submitted to His will?

Read Romans 8:26-27

16 According to these verses, what does the Holy Spirit do on our behalf?

17 The Spirit not only leads us to holiness, but also intercedes on our behalf in our weakness. How does this bring you comfort knowing that prayer is often lifted up in times of need?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

27

- In your group, come up with your own psalm of praise. Whether you keep the psalm of praise in your phone or on a piece of paper, let it be a prayer of praise that you'll see and recite twice a day.

Examples:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God | May your name be lifted up in my life today.

Father God in Heaven | May I worship you in all that I do. May I love everyone I come across.

The Life Groups Team would love to see your group's psalm! Email us at lifegroup@shepherdchurch.com

- On your own this week, pick up to ten of your favorite worship songs and go on a walk listening to these songs. Pray before you begin your walk that the Holy Spirit uses these songs to re-orient your heart and focus toward a holy and powerful God. Then, let the lyrics resonate deeply in your heart as you worship!

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

28

Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:

SESSION THREE

YOUR KINGDOM
COME

TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY



CONNECT



30

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

- If you were given a territory of your choice to name and rule, what would you call it?
- If you had to give up one of your favorite foods, which would it be and why?



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Three. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.





GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Go around the group and allow everyone to share what they found interesting from the video lesson this week.

Read Matthew 6:9-13 (if possible, choose a different translation than what your group used last week)

1 The concept of God's Kingdom comes from the fact that God is King. What is the Kingdom of God as you have come to understand it?

2 A kingdom is found inside the boundaries of which the king reigns. How does this apply to God's Kingdom (your Kingdom come)? If God's rule extended into every area of your life, how different would you actually lead your life?

32 3 If God's will was always done and His reign extended to absolutely everything, how different would our world function and how different would our lives play out?

Read Matthew 13:44-45 and Matthew 19:16-24

4 How do these verses describe the Kingdom of God? According to these verses, what must one do to receive this great value?

5 How do these verses apply to the life of a follower of King Jesus? What are the benefits of experiencing the Kingdom of God on earth? How do those benefits manifest practically for followers of Jesus?

The resurrection completes the inauguration of God's kingdom ... It is the decisive event demonstrating that God's kingdom really has been launched on earth as it is in heaven.

—N. T. Wright

Read Luke 9:23-27, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:21, and Philippians 3:8-11

6 According to these passages, what must happen for us to be a part of God's Kingdom? How is this different from our current social values?

33

7 The Christian term is "die to self." Having read the above passages, describe "die to self" in your own terms. How does "dying to one's self" enable God's Kingdom to reign in the life of a believer?



8 How have you seen a follower of King Jesus die to themselves and experience God's Kingdom on earth as in heaven?

9 What begins to happen for those who die to themselves and follow Jesus with their whole being, allowing Him to reign in all areas of their lives?

10 Why do you think the concept of God's Kingdom and His reign as King in the lives of God's children, is central to Jesus' teaching on prayer?

11 For those that have died to themselves, how would their prayers/communication with God change? As a result, how would their thoughts and actions practically change for the sake of God's Kingdom?

12 What can you do this week to "die to yourself" and experience God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven?

Deeper Study

Read Luke 9:23-27 and Luke 14:25-35

13 According to these passages, what is the cost of following King Jesus? Describe what must be let go in order to allow God to fully reign in the life of His children.

35

14 What does “give up everything” and “take up your cross daily and follow me” mean for you? What areas of your life could you let go of in order to follow Jesus more closely?

Re-read Luke 14:26

15 Explain how difficult this concept is for you. What “things” other than family would Jesus be referring to in this verse?

16 What do you think happens to someone who is willing to take on the cost of allowing God to fully reign? How do you think the prayers of this person change?



IMPACT

36

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- This year, as part of the theme, “Certainty of Eternity,” Pastor Dudley’s vision is to impact 30 mega cities around the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. When Jesus’ presence invades a city, it can be turned upside down for God’s goodness.

All year, Shepherd Church has been sending teams of volunteers on short-term mission trips and funding long-term Global Partners in these cities all over the world. More information on the trips and the cities may be found at **30cities.com**. More trips are scheduled for the end of 2018, and we are encouraging everyone in a Life Group to pray for these trips and the cities.

As a group this week, pray and lift up the Global Outreach team that is headed to Mexico City in November. This trip was adopted by the Life Groups ministry, and the team is made up of some Life Group Leaders! Pray that the Holy Spirit will work through these men and women to impact the people of Mexico City with the presence of Jesus, and for God’s will to be done in Mexico City as it is in heaven!!

- On your own this week, pray about something in your life that you can let go so that the Kingdom of God can reign in your life more and more! All of us have something that we are holding onto that causes a barrier between us and a closer relationship with God.

Up to this point in your life, some things may have been good, but even good options can hold us back from the best options God has for us. We need to pray and evaluate our choices at various times

in our lives to make sure we are following God's plan and not our own. We get so concerned with holding on to good things and resist taking a step of faith with the great things of God.

Write out on a piece of paper a few areas in your life which may be hindering you from connecting with God. Pray about these areas of your life that God would give you the willingness, desire, and ability to let go so that you may connect and build a tighter relationship with Him.

Whether it be with a tight grip, or loose grip, the things we hold onto do not allow us to fully grasp the Kingdom of God. By letting go, we can let the idea of "dying to self" be more evident in our lives so that God can work more deeply through us.

37

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.



PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

38

Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:



SESSION FOUR

YOUR WILL BE
DONE ON EARTH
AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN

TEACH US HOW TO

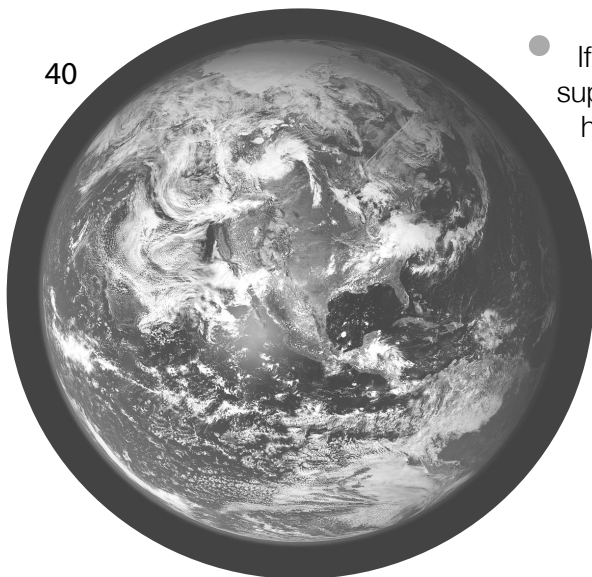
PRAY



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

40



- If you could have just one superpower, what would it be and how would you use it to help others?
- Share about the first big thing in your life that went the way you wanted.



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Four. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Go around and share what stood out to you from the video lesson this week.

Read Matthew 6:9-13 (if possible, choose a different translation than what your group used last week)

Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth.

—Robert Law

- 1 What is the difference between praying for God's will and praying for our will? Share some examples of how we often pray for our will rather than God's.

2 Describe God's will in your own words. How does one know that God's will is being done?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and Matthew 6:33

To pray is to change. This is a great grace. How good of God to provide a path whereby our lives can be taken over by love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control.

—Richard Foster

42

3 How are we able to do God's will "on earth as it is in heaven?"

4 Remembering last week's session, how does denying ourselves or dying to ourselves help us to do God's will "on earth as it is in heaven?" How are God's Kingdom and God's will related to one another?

Read John 14:26 and Galatians 5:22-26

5 If God's reign is prevalent in a believer's life, what evidence would be seen?



6 Describe how the fruits of the Spirit show up practically in a believer's life. How are the fruits of the Spirit evidence of God's Kingdom and will "on earth as it is in heaven?"

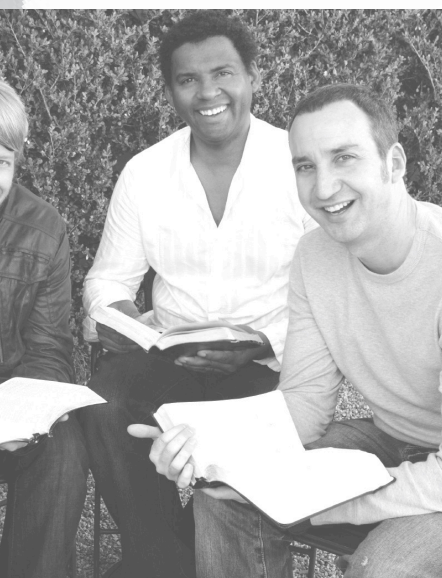
Read Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 19:14-15, Matthew 25:34-40, Acts 2:44-45, and James 1:27

43

7 According to these passages, when God's will is done on earth, what might it look like? Share how you are able to participate in God's will on earth.

Read Philippians 2:3-11

8 According to this passage, whose attitude are we to emulate? How does this passage combine last week's lesson on God's reign in our lives and this week's lesson on God's will done "on earth as it is in heaven?"



9 How would this attitude of considering others before yourself and humble submission change your prayer life? How would prayer with this heart and mindset help bring God's will to be done "on earth as it is in heaven?"

10 Share with your group some character changes that need to happen for you to do God's will "on earth as it is in heaven." Take some time to pray with each other for these changes to happen.

Deeper Study

44

Read Luke 22:42

11 Jesus made His request of God but then fully submitted to God's will regardless of the consequences. What does Jesus pray for in this situation and what are the consequences of this prayer? How would you have prayed in this situation?

Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of God's new project to not snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about.

—N. T. Wright

12 What makes this prayer so difficult to pray whole heartedly? Share a time and outcome when you actually did pray this kind of prayer. What did God do in your heart and life?

13 What steps might you need to take in order to pray for God's will to truly be done in your life?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- It is our desire to see the members of our Life Groups serve in their communities. Serving in your community is a way for you and your Life Group to be a light in your neighborhood. It is often noted, “Preach always, and if necessary, use words.” The point is that we are walking witnesses of our relationship with Jesus as we become His hands and feet to the world. **45**

On our website, **lifegroups.org/impact**, there are the names, contact information, and descriptions of organizations with which you can partner. These outreach suggestions have a large range of ideas for serving in different areas of the city. Feel free to be creative. If you come up with an idea not listed, please contact us so we can share ideas and help you bring your Community Impact Project to life.

On page 80 you will find the **Community Impact Project Worksheet**. This worksheet will help you organize your project and ensure it gets done. Have fun as you go out to be a blessing to others!

- We all have friends, family, and co-workers who need to understand that God knows them, and He knows what they’re going through. One way to help them come to a knowing relationship with Him is to pray for them with your Life Group, that they would find a loving relationship with Jesus. We would like for you and your Life Group to visit the **Blessing List on page 85**. Spend some time in your Life Group sharing names of men and women who need to encounter Jesus. Pray for them to submit their lives to the love of Jesus. After all, the greatest blessing anyone can receive is to be in relationship with the living God.

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

46

Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:



SESSION FIVE

GIVE US TODAY
OUR
DAILY BREAD

TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

48

- Describe your dream vacation.
- Share a time when you or someone you know, was down to their last dollar, and how God came through for them.



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Five. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Go around and share one thing that stood out to you from Dusty Frizzell's video lesson.

Read Matthew 6:9-13 (if possible, choose a different translation than what your group used last week)

1 What does Jesus mean by "our daily bread?" Describe the differences between needs and desires.

Read Matthew 6:7-8

2 What do these verses say about the Lord knowing our needs? How might this challenge and reshape the way you approach and make your requests of God?

50

3 Why do you think God wants us to make requests of Him if He already knows what we need?

4 When you consistently ask for your daily bread, how does that shape your heart toward God as your provider? What are the practical implications of praying for your daily bread?



Read Matthew 6:25-34 and Philippians 4:6

5 With what mindset are we to approach God with our requests? What do these passages teach us about relying on God to provide for us?

6 Why do you think God the Father wants us, His children, to rely on Him to provide for us rather than relying on ourselves? How is this reflected in our requests of the Father?



Read Philippians 4:10-13, Hebrews 13:5, and 1 Timothy 6:6-7

51

7 What parallels do you see in these passages? How do these verses connect with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:11?

8 What do these passages teach about how to accept what the Father provides? Describe why this teaching is easy or difficult for you to live out.

9 According to these verses, why do you think we are able to be content with whatever God provides?

10 How have you experienced God's provision for your needs?

52

11 Regardless of where you are with this teaching, what steps do you think you need to take in order to better live out this teaching?

Deeper Study

Read Proverbs 30:7-9

12 How are these verses similar to Matthew 6:11? Share about a time when you, or someone you know, has prayed a prayer like this one. What was the outcome?

*Don't let the crisis
paralyze you. Trust God to
do what you cannot. Obey God
and do what you can.*

—Max Lucado

13 How does this prayer go against the grain of our thinking and belief in who God really is and what kind of people He wants us to be?

If you lack wisdom in regard to a problem, you need to go to God in prayer.

—J. Vernon McGee

14 Why is a prayer like this often so difficult to pray wholeheartedly for many believers?

53

15 How does this prayer build our faith in God and help us to be content with His provision?

16 Read Proverbs 30:7-9 out loud together as a prayer with your group as you finish your meeting time.



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

54

● We have been talking about our daily bread. There are few greater symbols of God's love for us than the bread and juice taken at the Lord's Supper. We thought this would be an excellent opportunity for each of the Life Groups to take communion together. The Bible teaches us that every time we come together, we are to remember what our Lord Jesus did for us as He sacrificed Himself so that we could have a relationship with Him.

The form of bread and juice that you choose to remember Him does not matter. You may choose Hawaiian King's bread, or tortillas. You may serve juice in Dixie cups or in fine stemware. What God wants in these moments is your heart and mind fully directed and devoted to Him.

You may consider reading 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, or one of the Gospel accounts about the night the disciples received the Last Supper with Jesus, such as Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, or Luke 22:7-23. Then, take some time to pray together as a group before you partake in the elements.



This can be a very special time with your group. Remember the submission that Jesus had to the Father's will. Remember the pain He endured and the blood that was spilled. Remember the love that God has for each and every one of us. He was willing to die rather than live without us. Enjoy each other during this time and enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit as you remember His love for you.

- On your own this week, we are encouraging you to fast from something for a decided amount of time in order to connect with God. For those of you who have never fasted and are not aware of the power and importance of fasting, and for those of you who have, here are some very important facts that may help you as you do so:

Fasting is not just denying yourself food. **It is exchanging the needs and/or wants of the physical body for those of the spiritual.**

When you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. You will discover more time to pray and seek God's face. As He leads you to recognize and repent of unconfessed sin, you will experience special blessings from God. Fasting and seeking God paves the way for the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.

Devoted times of prayer and reading God's word will be very essential



if you are to enter into a more intimate communion with God to maintain your fast to its completion. While fasting, if you waste your energy on too many distractions to the neglect of spending special time with God, you will be denying yourself physically while failing to reap spiritually. The more time you spend with God in fellowship, listening, resting, worship, and adoration of Him, the more you read and meditate upon His word, the greater your connection to Him will be in prayer and the more meaningful your fast.

During your fast, you may have your struggles, discomforts, spiritual victories, and failures. In the morning, you may feel

like you are on top of the world, but by evening, you may wrestle with the flesh and be tempted to raid the refrigerator or whatever you are fasting from. To counteract temptations like these, take extra time to seek and spend time with the Lord for the strength only He can provide.

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

56

Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:

SESSION SIX

FORGIVE US OUR
DEBTS

TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

58

- Explain why you are someone who can dispose of old items easily or you have a hard time letting go.
- Are you more likely to admit fault, or blame others at home, at work, or in Life Group?



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Six. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Today we are going to talk about forgiveness. Take a couple of minutes to discuss what everyone thought about the video lesson with Dusty Frizzell.

Read Matthew 6:9-13 (if possible, choose a different translation than what your group used last week)

1 What is Jesus talking about when He mentions a debt or trespass?

2 The theme of God's forgiveness spans the entire Bible. Why do you think God's forgiveness is such a core value of His plan for humanity?

60 Read Isaiah 43:25, Psalm 32:3-5, Psalm 103:12, and 1 John 1:9

3 According to these passages, what happens when God forgives us?

4 How have you experienced God's grace and His complete forgiveness (not remembering your transgressions)?

Read Matthew 6:12

*If my pride
has been
untouched
when I pray
for forgiveness, I
have not prayed for
forgiveness, I don't
even understand it.*

—Dallas Willard

5 Why do you think this phrase is the only one that Jesus further explains in verses 14-15?

Read Matthew 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25

6 Describe the importance of grace and forgiving others. Share your interpretation of these verses. What are the ramifications for our lack of grace and forgiveness of others?

61

Read Romans 3:24, Romans 11:6, Ephesians 2:4-9, and Titus 2:11

7 How do these passages show God's free gift of grace to be integral to our forgiveness and salvation? How does this concept match up with Matthew 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25?

Read Matthew 18:21-35

8 Share your thoughts on this parable. What stands out to you about the king who forgave the first man?

9 Share how you relate to the first man who was forgiven. How have you taken God's grace and forgiveness and not extended it to others?

10 What damage does holding onto a grudge and not forgiving others do to a person's heart, mind, and soul? Knowing that there is damage, how might that change your perspective on why forgiveness was central to Jesus' mission and prayer?

62

11 What might the next step be where you can begin to show grace and forgive someone in your life (past or present)? Share how your Life Group can pray for you in this journey.



Deeper Study

Read Luke 17:3-4, Ephesians 4:31-32, and Colossians 3:13

12 What do these verses say about forgiveness? How are grace and forgiveness related?

13 What is your general attitude toward grace and forgiveness? How do you determine to whom you are to show grace and how you are to forgive?



63

14 How do you know that you've actually forgiven someone? What attitude do you have in your heart toward someone you've given grace and forgiven?

15 Why do you think giving grace and forgiveness to both others and ourselves is so difficult?



IMPACT

64

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- In your Life Group this week, we are going to ask you to do something that may be uncomfortable. If you're willing, we are going to ask you to pair up with someone (preferably same gender) and ask the other person to sit in as if they are someone who you need to forgive. Express your deep hurts to this surrogate, but also convey your willingness and desire to forgive them of these inflicted wounds. We understand this can be difficult, but we also know the benefits of outwardly expressing forgiveness to someone. This can also be a very good bonding time for your Life Group as they share with one another.

If you are not ready to verbalize forgiveness toward an offender, then this second part is for you.

Again, pair up with someone and ask them to be the stand in for you. Take this time to ask for forgiveness for something you have done to someone else. You may, or may not feel comfortable verbalizing how you have offended someone else, so in this case you can use generic terms to describe your offense.

Example: John, please forgive me for sinning against you. I am sorry that I hurt you, will you forgive me?

- In keeping with the theme of forgiveness, we would like you to consider writing a letter to someone you need to forgive. This letter is not to be sent to the person it is addressing ... at least not at the moment. That may be an exercise you go through at a much later date. For now, the intent of this letter is to get your thoughts out of

your head and down onto physical or digital paper.

Many of us have people in our lives who have caused great trauma and pain to us physically, emotionally, mentally, and/or spiritually. As we have learned in this study, when we hold onto these hurts with thoughts of revenge or hatred, somehow it eats into our souls causing further damage to us. It is up to us to release ourselves from the bondage in which these thoughts hold us.

This may not be an easy process for many so please pray through it as you begin. There is no need to bring the other person into the equation. This can be just between you and God. By writing a letter, we release these thoughts about this person to paper, and give whatever anger and need to get even over to God. Even if you're not ready to completely forgive, write down your thoughts and let God heal your heart as you go.

We all have a step that we can take regardless of how small it may seem to others. No one has the right to tell you to just get over your wounds. But, we all need to take cleansing steps with God so that He can heal us. Allow Him to work in your heart as you go through this exercise.

65

Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.



PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

66

Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:

*There's no
greater lifestyle
and no greater
happiness than that
of having a continual
conversation with God.*

—Brother Lawrence

SESSION SEVEN

LEAD US NOT
INTO TEMPTATION
... DELIVER US
FROM EVIL

TEACH US HOW TO

PRAY



CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Please take a few minutes and answer at least one of the following questions:

68

- What is one food you cannot pass up when presented?
- If you could erase one thing from your life, what would that be?



DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session Seven. Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion.



GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

Start this session by sharing one thing that caught your attention from the video teaching.

Read Matthew 6:9-13 (if possible, choose a different translation than what your group used last week)

- 1 How has reading this passage once a week in your Life Group, as well as studying the specific parts of the prayer week by week, helped you gain a greater understanding for the Lord's Prayer?

*We have to
pray with our
eyes on God, not
on the difficulties.*

—Oswald Chambers

- 2 Describe why you believe temptation to be a sin or not.

Read James 1:13-15

3 What is temptation? Why do you think we fall into temptation even though Jesus instructed us to pray that we would not be led into temptation?

70

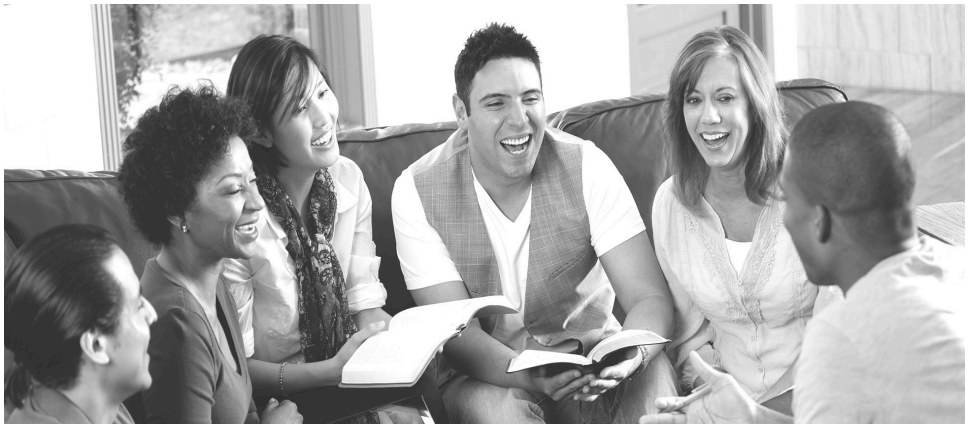
Read Matthew 15:18-19 and Mark 7:20-23

4 According to these passages, what does Jesus expose in the heart of people? How are temptation and sin related?

5 What has been a temptation with which you have struggled? How have you combated that temptation from turning into sin?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 10:14, and 1 Timothy 6:9-11

6 What do these verses teach about combating temptation? Share a practical example of fleeing these or any other temptation before falling into sin. How have you seen or experienced this tactic work?



Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and Hebrews 4:15-16

71

7 How do these verses change your thinking on temptation? What do these verses reveal about our heavenly Father's grace and discipline for us as we journey to become more like Christ? Explain why this does or does not bring you comfort.

Read John 10:10, James 4:7, and 1 Peter 5:8

8 How do these verses describe "the evil one?" What can we learn about combating "the evil one?"

9 How is "the evil one" associated with temptation? Why do you think Jesus would connect temptation and "the evil one?" Who/what is the "evil one?"

Read John 17:15-19, Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18

10 How do these verses help us to pray as we are tempted by “the evil one?” How does the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit bring about a renewed mind and transformed heart to help resist temptation?

72

11 How have you been encouraged to battle the temptation of sin?

12 How can your Life Group pray for you to strive after God and seek Him before you feel the weight of temptation creep upon you? What tools/tips/methods did you learn from this study that you can implement before you fall into sin?

Deeper Study

Read Matthew 4:1-11

13 What is Jesus being tempted with in this passage? Share your belief that this was, or was not, an honest temptation for Jesus because He is God. Explain some thoughts you had regarding this passage after having gone through the first set of questions in this week’s session.

14 Why do you think the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan? How do you know that the Holy Spirit will not lead you into this kind of temptation?

15 How was Jesus delivered from “the evil one” in this scenario?

73

16 What is the takeaway for you from this passage and these questions?



IMPACT

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

● For Life Groups who are going on a break for the holidays after the series, this is your last official meeting until the next series. An important aspect of your Life Group is celebrating together. We want to encourage you to plan a fun night of BBQ/potluck, movies and games with your group in celebration of all that God is doing. Don't worry about an agenda or study for this time. Relax and simply enjoy each other and fellowship with one another.

- Temptation to sin is part of every believer's life. Healing from that sin requires steps of honesty and trust. Confession is not something we are used to practicing in Christian culture. For those of you who wonder what confession is, simply put, it's verbalizing your sin to God.

This week, we have learned that we can trust God as the perfect, ever-present Father who allows us to enter into His presence, and experience His protection and love. We may even feel unworthy of entering into His presence because of our own brokenness. This is where confession can help us better understand His love and grace toward us.

- 74 Confession is NOT telling God something He doesn't already know. God is omnipotent, and He already knows everything. In fact, He also knows what you don't want to confess. He knows everything you have ever thought, said, and done. God knows ... and He loves you! We don't have to pretend to move forward from this lesson as if everything is okay. This time, we can actually be okay and made complete by confessing our sin to God.

On your own, set some time apart this coming week for a one-on-one with Jesus and make a list of unconfessed temptations to present to Him. Be honest with yourself, and be honest with God. Experience just how liberating it is to confess your heart to God and allow His love, mercy, and grace to envelope you.

Here are some Bible verses that may help you with your process.

Psalms 32:5. Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Proverbs 28:13. Whoever conceals their sin does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

1 John 1:19. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Our huffing and puffing to impress God, our scrambling for brownie points, our thrashing about trying to fix ourselves while hiding our pettiness and wallowing in guilt are nauseating to God and are a flat out denial of the gospel of grace.

—Brennan Manning

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests, and make a note when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group.

Prayer Requests:

Praise Reports:



LIFE GROUP TOOLBOX

LIFE GROUP ROSTER

Name	Phone	Email
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		

LIFE GROUP AGREEMENT

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend you discuss your guidelines in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group. If the idea of a written agreement is unfamiliar to your group, we encourage you to give it a try.

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WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING VALUES:

Clear Purpose	To encourage and challenge each other to live the LIFE God has called us to live (John 10:10, Matthew 28:18-20).
Group Attendance	To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late).
Safe Environment	To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments or simple fixes).
Be Confidential	To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group.
Spiritual Health	To give group members permission to help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.
Welcome Newcomers	To invite our friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers.
Building Relationships	To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly.

WE HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED AND AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Childcare _____

Starting Time _____

Ending Time _____

LIFE GROUP CALENDAR

Healthy groups share responsibilities and group ownership. It might take some time for this to develop. Shared ownership ensures no one person has responsibility for the group. Use the calendar to keep track of social events, mission projects, birthdays, or days off. Complete this calendar at your first or second meeting. Planning ahead will increase attendance and shared ownership.

Date	LESSON	LOCATION	LEADER	SNACK/MEAL
<i>Monday, February 7</i>	<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Steve & Laura's</i>	<i>Bill Jones</i>	<i>John & Alice</i>

LIFE GROUP COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT WORKSHEET

80

Where?	
When?	
Task Assignments	
<u>Name</u>	<u>Task</u>

Please go to our website www.lifegroups.org/impact for Outreach Opportunities and contact information to local organizations you and your group may partner with to serve.

FAQS

What do we do on the first night of our group?

Like all fun things in life—have a party! A “get to know you” coffee, dinner, or dessert is a great way to launch a new series. You may want to review the Life Group Agreement (page 78) and share the names of a few friends you can invite to join you. But most importantly, have fun before your study time begins.

81

Where do we find new members for our group?

This can be troubling, especially for new groups that have only a few people, or for existing groups that lose a few people along the way. We encourage you to pray with your group and then brainstorm a list of people from work, church, your neighborhood, your children’s school, family, the gym, and so forth. Then have each group member invite several of the people on his or her list.

Before every series, the Life Groups Team will conduct Life Group sign-ups, which allow people to sign-up for “Open” Life Groups. However, studies show it is exponentially more effective when Life Group members personally invite others to their group.

No matter how you find members, it’s vital that you stay on the lookout for new people to join your group. All groups tend to go through healthy attrition – the result of moves, releasing new leaders, ministry opportunities, etc. If you and your group stay open, you’ll be amazed at the people God sends your way. The next person just might become a friend for life. You never know!

How long will this group meet?

It’s totally up to the group once you come to the end of this seven-week study. Most groups meet weekly for at least their first seven weeks, but every other week can work as well. We strongly recommend that the group continue to meet after the series for the first six months on a weekly basis if at all possible. This allows for continuity, and if people miss a meeting, they aren’t gone for a whole month.

At the end of this series, each group member may decide if he or she wants to continue on for another study. Some groups launch

relationships for years to come, and others are stepping stones into another group experience. Either way, enjoy the journey.

What if this group is not working for us?

You're not alone! This could be the result of a personality conflict, life stage difference, geographical distance, level of spiritual maturity, or any number of things. Relax. Pray for God's direction, and at the end of this 7-week series, decide whether to continue with this group, or find another. You don't buy the first car you look at or marry the first person you date, and the same goes with a group. Don't bail out before the seven weeks are up – God might have something to teach you. Also, don't run from conflict or prejudice people before you have given them a chance. God is still working in them too!

82

Who is the leader?

Most groups have an official leader. But ideally, the group will mature and members will rotate the leadership of meetings. We have discovered that healthy groups rotate leaders on a regular basis. This model ensures that all members grow, give their unique contribution and develop their gifts. This Study Guide and the Holy Spirit can keep things on track even when you rotate leaders. Christ has promised to be in your midst as you gather. Ultimately, God is your leader each step of the way.

How do we handle the child care needs in our group?

We suggest that you empower the group to openly brainstorm solutions. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room, and to share the cost of a baby sitter (or two) who can be with the kids in a different part of the house. In this way, parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home. A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults. A third idea is to rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson or care for the children either in the same home or in another home nearby. This can be an incredible blessing for kids. Finally, the most common idea is to decide that you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually, or as a couple, and to make your own arrangements for child care.

ENCOUNTERS AND SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus has left each one of us with a task ... to make disciples! We believe that Life Groups are essential in this task. Life Groups are a place where people can come together to study the Bible and grow to become more like Christ. Life Groups are a great place to make disciples.

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Since Life Groups are such a good opportunity and environment to make disciples we want to help equip our leaders to be the best disciple-makers they can be. Therefore, we strongly encourage all of our Life Group leaders and members to go to an Encounter and the subsequent School of Discipleship.

The Encounter is a weekend which will help you connect with God in a way you may have not experienced before, and will help you realize what the cross means to us today. The School of Discipleship immediately follows the Encounter and teaches how to become the disciple that Jesus invites all of us to be. The School of Discipleship has three tracks: Doctrine, Transformation, and Serving. Whether you are a current leader, a prospective leader, or you just want to take the next step in your faith, we believe the Encounter and School of Discipleship will change your life and help you become a more fruitful disciple-maker.

<i>Upcoming Encounters</i>	
<i>Men's Encounters</i>	<i>Women's Encounters</i>
<i>September 14-16, 2018</i>	<i>October 5-7, 2018</i>
<i>February 2019</i>	<i>March 2019</i>
<i>June 2019</i>	<i>July 2019</i>

Please check our website for future Encounter dates, more general information on Encounters, and to register online:

lifegroups.org/encounters

BECOMING A LEADER

What does it take to be a leader?

Have a heart for people.
Open to having people in your home.
Serve some coffee or soft drinks.
Tell others about the group!

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Basically, you need to have a desire to apply the Bible to your life and want to share that with others. The group does not have to meet at your home, and you do not have to have a Bible college degree to lead. You simply must have some basic people skills and a desire to grow in the Lord.

How can I become a leader?

First, you do have to be a member of Shepherd Church. To be a member, you must complete the “Membership Inquiry Class.” These classes are usually about two hours long, and are offered every two months. You may call the church office at 818.831.9333 to find out when the next one will be held. You may also visit: **shepherdchurch.com/member**.

Second, you need to sign-up for the New Life Group Leader Training. It is a two-hour training and orientation on Life Groups. Here you will learn the philosophy of Life Groups and how to effectively begin leading a group. Completing this course does not obligate you, but does allow you to become a new leader. To register online and find more information, please visit: **lifegroups.org/leader**

BLESSING LIST

The Blessing List is an opportunity to intentionally pray for people who don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The greatest blessing anyone can receive is to be in relationship with the living God! Throughout the series, pray for God's Spirit to bless and reveal Jesus' love to each person listed.

[illegible]

LEADING FOR THE FIRST TIME

1 Sweaty palms are a healthy sign. The Bible says God is gracious to the humble. Remember who is in control; the time to worry is when you're not worried. Those who are soft in heart (and sweaty palmed) are those whom God is sure to speak through.

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2 Seek support. Ask your leader, co-leader, or a close friend to pray for you and prepare with you before the session. Walking through the study will help you anticipate potentially difficult questions and discussion topics.

3 Bring your uniqueness to the study. Lean into who you are and how God wants you to uniquely lead the study.

4 Prepare. Prepare. Prepare. Go through the session several times. If you are using the DVD, listen to the teaching segment and take notes for yourself. Go to **lifegroups.com** to download the Leader's Notes. Consider writing in a journal or fasting for a day to prepare yourself for what God wants to do.

5 Don't wait until the last minute to prepare.

6 Ask for feedback so you can grow. Perhaps in an e-mail or on cards handed out at the study, have everyone write down three things you did well and one thing you could improve. Don't get defensive, but show an openness to learn and grow.

7 Prayerfully consider launching a new group. This doesn't need to happen overnight, but God's heart is for this to happen over time.

8 Not all Christians are called to be leaders or teachers, but we are all called to be "shepherds" of a few.

9 Share with your group what God is doing in your heart. God is searching for those whose hearts are fully His. Share your trials and victories. We promise that people will relate.

10 Prayerfully consider whom you would like to pass the baton to next week. God is ready for the next member of your group to go on the faith journey you just traveled. Make it fun, and expect God to do the rest.



LIFE GROUP LEADING 101

Top Ten Ideas For New Leaders

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Congratulations! You have responded to the call to help shepherd Jesus' flock. There are a few other tasks in the family of God that surpass the contribution you will be making. As you prepare to lead, whether it is one session or the entire series, here are a few thoughts to keep in mind. We encourage you to read these and review them with each new discussion leader before he or she leads.

1 Remember that you are not alone. God knows everything about you, and He knew you would be asked to lead your group. Remember it is common for all good leaders to feel they are not ready to lead. Moses, Solomon, Jeremiah, and Timothy - they all were reluctant to lead. God promises, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Whether you are leading for one evening, for several weeks, or for a lifetime, you will be blessed as you serve.

2 Don't try to do it alone. Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy leadership team. If you can enlist a co-leader to help you lead the group, you will find your experience to be much richer. This is your chance to involve as many people as you can in building a healthy group. All you have to do is call and ask people to help. You'll be surprised at the response.

3 Just be yourself. If you won't be you, who will? God wants you to use your unique gifts and temperament. Don't try to do things exactly like another leader; do them in a way that fits you! Just admit it when you don't have an answer, and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it, and you'll sleep better at night!

4 Prepare for your meeting ahead of time. Review the session and the leader's notes, and write down your responses to each question.

Pay special attention to exercises that ask group members to do something other than engage in discussion.

5 Pray for your group members by name. Before you begin your session, go around the room in your mind and pray for each member by name. You may want to review the prayer list at least once a week. Ask God to use your time together to uniquely touch the heart of every person. Expect God to lead you to whomever He wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead!

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6 When you ask a question, be patient. Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question, and if silence doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else. After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple "thanks" or "good job." Then ask, "How about somebody else?" or "Would someone who hasn't shared like to add anything?" Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who aren't ready to say, pray or do anything. If you give them a safe setting, they will blossom over time.

7 Provide transitions between questions. When guiding the discussion, always read aloud the transitional paragraphs and the questions. Ask the group if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage. Don't call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud.

8 Break-up into small groups each week, or they won't stay. If your group has more than seven people, we strongly encourage you to have the group occasionally gather in discussion circles of three or four people during the Grow and Impact sections of the study. With a greater opportunity to talk in a small circle, people will connect more with the study, apply more quickly what they're learning and ultimately get more out of it. A small circle also encourages a quiet person to participate, and tends to minimize the affects of a more vocal or dominant member. It can also help people feel more loved in your group. When you gather again at the end of the section, you can have one person summarize the highlights from each circle.

Small circles are also helpful during prayer time. People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable trying it with just two or three others. Also, prayer requests won't take as much time, so circles will have more time to actually pray. When you gather back with the whole group, you can have one person from each circle briefly update everyone on the prayer requests. People are more willing to pray in small circles if they know that the whole group will hear all the prayer requests.

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9 Rotate facilitators weekly. At the end of each meeting, ask the group who would be a good candidate to lead the following week. Let the group help select your weekly facilitator. You may be perfectly capable of leading each time, but you will help others grow in their faith and gifts if you give them opportunities to lead. You can use the Life Group Calendar to fill in the names of all meeting leaders at once if you prefer.

10 One final challenge (for new or first time leaders): Before your first opportunity to lead, look up each of the five passages listed below. Read each one as a devotional exercise to help equip yourself with a shepherd's heart. Trust us on this one. If you do this, you will be more than ready for your first meeting.

Matthew 9:36

1 Peter 5:2-4

Psalms 23

Ezekiel 34:11-16

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12