

Leader's Growth Group Homework Guide

For the week of November 12, 2017

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ **NO GROWTH GROUPS THANKSGIVING WEEK, NOVEMBER 19-25**

⇒ **BEGIN TO GET READY FOR THE WINTER QUARTER & FEEDBACK FORMS:** *Begin to talk about plans for the Winter Quarter. Feedback Forms were mailed to your meeting location. Make sure you give your group time to fill them out this week or next. Look them over with your host and then drop them off at the church or email them to your Growth Group admin.*

⇒ **IMPORTANT DATES:**

- Last Week of Growth Group: Nov 26 – Dec 2
- Winter Sign-Ups: Jan 6/7 – 13/14
- Winter Quarter: Jan 14 – Mar 17

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. If you were to compare the image of Jesus you heard about this weekend with the image of him you had when you were growing up, how would they compare?

Additional Question: How was the description of Jesus from this weekend's teaching the same or different from how you think a person on the street would describe Jesus?

What's been the biggest influence on how your image of Jesus has changed?

If someone says church, ask them what aspect of church, and what about it had an impact.

2. Chris talked about the boldness we can have when we come into Jesus' presence. For many of us, "boldness" would not be the word we would use to describe how we approach God or Jesus. What words would you use to describe how you have approached Jesus in your life?

Possible Answers: Ashamed, bitter, fearful, joyful, guilty.

Additional Question: What has influenced how you've approached Jesus?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We can face loss, health challenges, uncertainty and problems with confidence because of who we have as our high priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). The challenge is that when we're in the middle of one of these difficulties, it's easy to start doubting because we can't physically see Jesus. How could 2 Kings 6:8-17 encourage you to remember that God is present and on your side in the midst of challenges?

Hebrews 4:14-16 - ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

2 Kings 6:8-17 - ⁸Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place."

⁹The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." ¹⁰So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places.

¹¹This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

¹²"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

¹³"Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." ¹⁴Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

¹⁵When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

¹⁶"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

¹⁷And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Can you think of some reasons why it is so hard to maintain our confidence in Jesus when we face difficult times?

Additional Question: What truths about God or Jesus do we begin to doubt when we get in tough times?

Have you ever had someone in your life who reminded you of Jesus' presence and power when you were in the midst of a difficult time?

Not everyone will have an answer for this question, but those who do should have a good story to tell.

Additional Questions

- 1. How difficult is it for you to maintain the idea that "those who are with us are more than those who are with them?"*
- 2. What helps you develop the perspective of God being bigger than your challenges or problems?*
- 3. What are the biggest hurdles for you maintaining the perspective that God is bigger than your challenges and problems?*
- 4. What is something you could do to remind yourself of who Jesus really is in the midst of a challenge or crisis?*
- 5. Do you think most people have this perspective when they face challenges and problems?*
- 6. If you had been standing there when Elisha' said, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them," how do you think you'd have felt?*

Note: If you want to know the rest of the story read, 2 Kings 18-23.

2. We heard this weekend how we often have a limited edition, coloring book picture of Jesus. In contrast to that image, Chris gave us a picture of the eternal Jesus from Revelation 19. Another portrait of Jesus that is definitely not a coloring book image is found in Colossians 1:15-20.

What do you find most encouraging, helpful or confusing in this passage?

Colossians 1:15-20 - ¹⁵The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God

was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

He is the visible image of the invisible God. Everything was created by him, for him, and through him. Everything holds together through him. He's the head of the church.

Additional Questions: These are all great things about Jesus, but what does this have to do with us? What difference does it make in your life that these things are true about Jesus?

The picture of Jesus Chris painted this weekend and the one found in Colossians 1 are probably very different from the picture of Jesus we had when we first began to follow him. As you think about what drew you, or is drawing you to follow Christ now, how would you describe what it was about him that attracted you to him?

Possible Answers: His love for you; His forgiveness of sin; His grace and acceptance; His teachings; His impact on someone you knew; His offer of heaven; His answer to why we're here; His offer of purpose in life; His claim to be God.

Additional Question: In what ways has what draws you to Jesus changed over your life?

3. Chris talked about the confidence we can have when we face challenges and difficulties in life. The Apostle Paul is someone who had many challenging experiences in his life and it would have been easy for him to quit. Yet he was consistently able to maintain his confidence instead of giving up and throwing in the towel. What do you see in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 that helps explain how he was able to persevere in the face of difficulties?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - ¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Note that Paul begins chapter 4 and this paragraph with the same statement, "We do not lose heart." Then he goes on to explain why he doesn't lose heart. His focus was on things that were eternal, not things that were temporal. He knew that as he aged and

was persecuted, his physical body would be deteriorating, but his soul could be growing no matter what. He had an eternal perspective in which he focused on what was going to last for eternity instead of what was only temporary.

Additional Question: Paul mentions his “light and momentary troubles.” In 2 Corinthians 11:21-29, he lists some of the difficulties and challenges he had been through. How do you think he was able to describe the things he lists as “light and momentary?”

2 Corinthians 11:21-29 - ²¹To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. ²³Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

He could call them “light and momentary” because he was comparing them to the “eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” In all that he went through, he knew he was storing up treasures in heaven. So as long as he kept his focus on heaven, he could go through anything. He wasn’t immune to pain; he was always comparing what he suffered to what his eternity was going to be like.

Additional Question: What would it take for you to be able to describe what you’re going through with the same words – “light and momentary?”

What is most challenging to you about focusing on the unseen over the seen?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Is there any challenge or difficulty you’re facing now that you’d like to have more boldness in facing?
2. Looking back on this week’s sermon and study, what’s most important for you to remember?

Praise/Prayer Requests:



THE DAILY DOSE – Use your cell phone to text the keyword “daily” to 51400 to receive a daily text message with a link to a quick video devotional during the “Identity Theft” sermon series. Standard text rates apply. Questions? Email info@northcoastchurch.com



COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Community Service is a ministry of North Coast Church dedicated to being the hands and feet of Jesus and showing God’s love in tangible ways through service in the community. There are many opportunities for you or your Growth Group to go out and serve. Also look for opportunities to help with Christmas Outreach Tree in the coming weeks. Check out <http://northcoastchurchcommunityservice.org>

Discovering The Other Jesus

The Limited Edition Jesus:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

The Eternal Jesus:

Daniel 7:9-14, Revelation 4 & 5, 19:11-16, Colossians 1:15-22

Reclaiming What Was Stolen:

Genesis 2 & 3, Romans 8:12-17, 2 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 3:1-3

Hebrews 4:14-16:

- This changes how we approach **God**.
- This changes how we approach **ourselves**.
- This changes how we approach **our problems**.
- This changes how we approach **others**.