

Living the Gospel Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. If you could switch places with one person for a day, whom might you choose?
2. What is one relationship beyond your natural family that has been significant to you over the past 12 months?

Read the following passages: Ephesians 1:15-23.

Immediately after praising God for the abundant blessings that belong to those who are in Christ, Paul begins praying “that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.” Because these blessings are “spiritual” and “in the heavenly realms,” there is a very real risk that we will overlook them and instead be preoccupied with whatever our culture happens to value in the moment. So what does it look like when we actually believe the Gospel? Four big themes emerge in this passage: faith, hope, love, and power.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What does it mean to have “faith in the Lord Jesus”? What is the relationship between faith and obedience? What is James’ concern in James 2:14-26? What is Paul arguing in Galatians 3:7-14? How do these two passages complement one another?
2. Do you trust Jesus? If so, how does that trust impact your daily life?
3. What is “the hope to which [God] has called” us? How does this hope help us navigate the many other hopes which most of us have, such as:
 - The hope for a successful career
 - The hope for a loving family
 - The hope for financial security
 - The hope for a happy life?
4. Genesis 1-2 indicates that God’s intention for creation was to fill the earth with his glorious rule through us. How can our lives in the present connect with that original purpose?
5. Read Mark 10:29-30. Jesus indicates in this passage that following him often involves great sacrifice (e.g. leaving “home or brothers or sisters or mother or father”). It is nearly impossible to live a life of great sacrifice without also being filled up in some significant way. What does this passage imply about how we’re to be filled up? Is your life characterized by great giving and great receiving? Explain.

6. Read John 13:34-35. Why is this command so important and how are you putting it into practice?
7. Read Acts 19:11-20. How might the circumstances in Ephesus have shaped the content of Paul's letter to the Ephesians?
8. Two of the primary ways we experience demonic influence are 1) words spoken by other people, and 2) our own thoughts. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. Can you recall any words spoken by somebody else that continue to negatively influence your life? Explain. Are there any thoughts that you regularly entertain that pull you away from God or his purpose for your life? Explain. How can you take those thoughts captive?
9. What is one way you would like to grow in either faith, hope, love, or power?

Pray