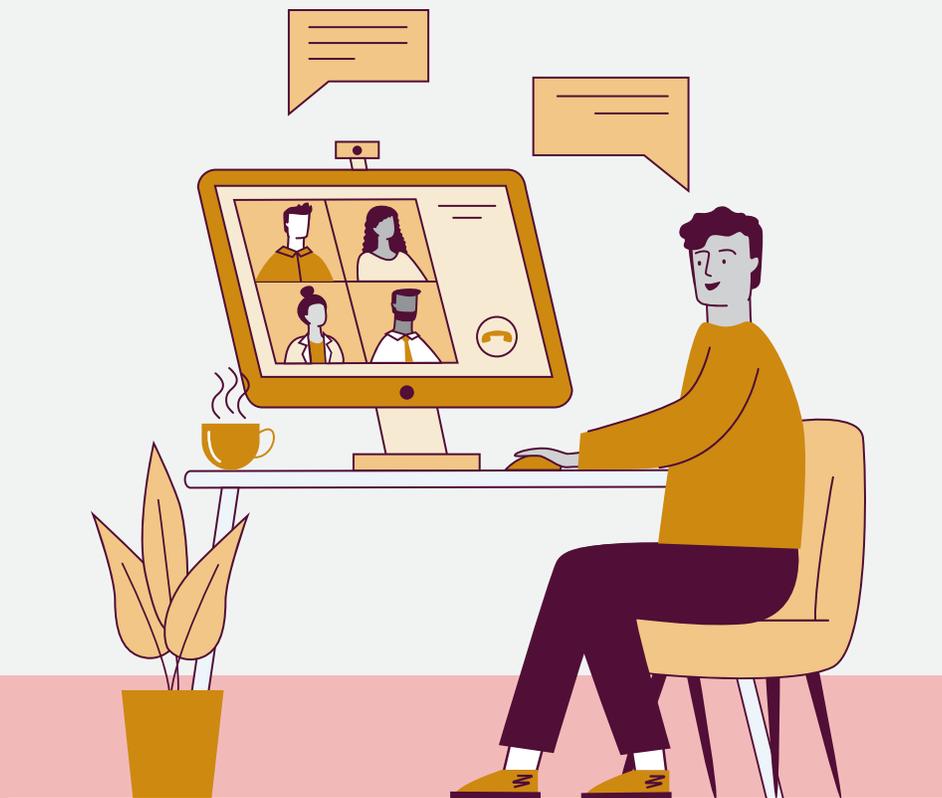


ONLINE GROUP PLAN

Spring 2020 // Dealing with Messy Relationships // Session 4: Serve

Suggested Use Date: May 17, 2020

For use with Bible Studies for Life Leader Guide and Personal Study Guide



PREPARATION

Best Practices for Leading an Online Group



PRAY for your group members, and for God to grant you insight as you study and prepare your Bible study session. Do this throughout the week.



SCHEDULE your group's online Bible study using the online meeting tool you prefer. Invite group members and guests to participate using a meeting ID if required by your online meeting tool. [Click here](#) to view a Best Practices document for online groups.



SEND digital copies of the next session to group members who do not have a print copy. If using the *Personal Study Guide*, encourage group members to read the passage and comments for the next session.



CONNECT with your group via email or text messaging early in the week.

Create your own message:

- Briefly tell the group the title of your next Bible study, why it is important, and what they will learn.
- Challenge group members to study before the group session if your group uses a *Personal Study Guide*.
- Remind group members when your group will meet online.

Or copy and paste this suggested wording into the email or text message to your group:

WEEKLY MESSAGE

When have you received stellar service? Good customer service is about doing what's right and helping the other person. We have seen this play out during the COVID-19 crisis. People doing the right thing and helping others. When we're talking about relationships, the principle still applies: we strengthen our relationships when we help and serve the other person. Serving is a tangible way to love others. Join us as we discover the biblical mandate to serve by carrying the burden of others.



PREPARE to lead your group's Bible study.

- **Study** the Bible passage.
- **Listen** to the Bible Studies for Life Adult Podcast. Search for *Bible Studies for Life Adults* at your preferred podcast app or access the podcast at BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra.
- **Visit** BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra for additional leader helps, including the podcast, news articles, additional questions, and a devotional blog for group members.
- **Create** your teaching plan for guiding your group's online Bible study experience. Use the Online Group Plan on the next pages as a starting point, modifying it for your group as needed. Consult the *Adult Leader Guide* commentary, *Advanced Bible Study*, or *Herschel Hobbs* commentary for additional insights on the passage. The *Adult Leader Pack* will also provide posters and handouts to supplement the group experience.



REMIND your group members to study and prepare via another email or text message closer to the day your group meets.

- Include a quote from the *Personal Study Guide*, a question, or an insight you plan to discuss with the group when you meet online.



HELPFUL LINKS

- *Bible Studies for Life* main landing page: BibleStudiesforLife.com
- Digital version of *Bible Studies for Life*: curriculum.lifeway.com
- *Bible Studies for Life* EXTRA leader helps: BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra
- *Bible Studies for Life* Podcast: BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra
- Free Coronavirus links and leader helps: lifeway.com/coronavirus



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NOTES

GREET people as they join your online group. Share your screen with the group and play a funny video clip of someone receiving great service at a restaurant, store, airline, and so on (a video option can be found at BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra). Then ask **Question #1** on page 105 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **“When have you received stellar service?”** Return to the group screen and invite others to answer.

DIRECT group members to **“The Bible Meets Life”** on page 106 of the PSG. Introduce the importance of serving others by inviting a volunteer to read aloud the text. Call attention to **“The Point”** on page 106 of the PSG: **“Seize the opportunity to serve.”**

PRAY: Transition into the study by asking God to open group members’ eyes and stir their hearts to the importance of serving others. Thank the Lord for teaching us what true service means and modeling it for us.

ASK a group member to read aloud **Galatians 5:13-15** on page 107 of the PSG. Share your screen to display the Scripture text. Then return to the group screen.

EXPLAIN: Freedom is a natural human hunger. We all want to feel free, but sin so easily entangles us and holds our feet to the ground. In Galatians 5, however, Paul reminded us that a revolution has come through Jesus. Because of His perfect sacrifice, the power of sin has been broken, and we can be free from the downward spiral of sin.

DISCUSS **Question #2** on page 107 of the PSG: **“What’s the connection between freedom in Christ and the command to serve?”**

ASK a group member to read aloud **Galatians 6:1-5** on page 108 of the PSG. Share your screen to display the Scripture text. Then return to the group screen.

EXPLAIN: In Galatians 6, Paul gave us a more effective way for using our energy and time: helping others. Paul began by describing a way of helping others that may surprise you: serve others by confronting them in love. “Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit” (v. 1).

DISCUSS **Question #3: “How can we help others see blind spots in a way that strengthens relationships?”** or **Question #4: “What does carrying one another’s burdens look like?”** on page 109 of the PSG.

TRANSITION: We must show our love by serving the other person. Serving others means helping to carry their burdens. We also see that we must seize every opportunity to serve.

ASK a group member to read aloud **Galatians 6:10** on page 110 of the PSG. Share your screen to display the Scripture text. Then return to the group screen.

EXPLAIN: While Christians should stand ready to serve in any way they are needed, the wisest way to serve others is by opening up your unique package of spiritual gifts. Consider how the Holy Spirit has hardwired you for ministry and use those gifts and abilities to serve and meet the needs that lie before you. All that remains for us to do is to open our hearts and eyes to see the needs and opportunities, and go for it!

DISCUSS **Question #5** on page 110 of the PSG: **“What opportunities does our group have to serve others in our church and community?”**

DO: Direct group members to **Engage** with **“Serving Others”** on page 111 of the PSG to help them consider ways they can serve others (if time allows; otherwise ask group members to engage with this activity in the coming week).

GUIDE: Refer back to **“The Point”** for this session: **“Seize the opportunity to serve.”**

GUIDE: Direct group members to page 112 of the PSG. Encourage them to choose one of the following applications for the coming week:

- **Thank someone.** Consider the person who served you, confronted you in love, or helped you carry a burden. Contact him or her and express your appreciation.
- **Restore someone.** If a friend or family member is in the midst of sinful behavior or has made a bad decision, ask God for wisdom and direction on the best way to lovingly talk with the person. Act on your prayer.
- **Serve someone.** As a group, identify individuals whom you could walk alongside and help ease their burden. Use this as an opportunity to love and bring them into your group.

PRAY: Invite the group to share prayer requests. Conclude by thanking God for the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit to be able to serve others. Ask Him to place people in our lives for whom we can make a difference and for the courage to do what it takes to serve them.

NEXT STEPS



- Contact group members regularly to pray with them. Encourage them to devote some personal quiet time with God this week, and to study the group's next Bible study session.
- Send digital copies of the next session to group members who do not have a print copy. If using the Personal Study Guide, encourage group members to read the passage and comments for the next session.
- Repeat the process outlined in the Preparation section of this document.