

life groups' sermon guide

gone fishin' - Why Fish?

(And how to do some fishing—or running, or boxing)



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.

Introduction

"It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no 'ordinary' people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations -- these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit -- immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously -- no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner -- no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment." --C. S. Lewis, From The Weight of Glory.

[Q] Summarize, in your own words, what Lewis is saying in the paragraph above.

[Q] How do Lewis' words change your perspective of those people with which you work, play, conduct business and even disagree or dislike?

[Q] What does he mean when he says "You have never talked to a mere mortal"?

[Q] What is meant by people being either "immortal horrors or everlasting splendours"?

[Q] How does this new perspective (toward the people we meet and associate with daily) affect your attitude toward evangelism?

Study

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Paul says in these verses that he became a "slave" to others.

- What do you think Paul means by this?
- What was his goal in this "slavery"?
- How can you apply this in your life with those people with whom you regularly have contact?

Paul states that he became “a Jew to the Jews”; as “one without the Law to those without the Law” and “all things to all men”, so that he might by all means save some.

- In what ways should we, as Christians, not expect people to be like we are?
- By becoming a “slave” to others, what freedom do we sacrifice?
- How can this be an exercise of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)?
- How can we apply the principles of becoming like those different from us without compromising our morals or the gospel?
- How should we change the form of the message without changing the content of the gospel?

Using the fishing analogy again:

- What do fish like to eat? Is it the same as your food preference?
- Where do fish live? Is it the same place that you live?
- What planning and preparation are made to go fishing?
- What practical applications can you see to apply the principles of fishing or Paul’s example of becoming a slave to sharing the gospel with others?

Read 1 Cor 9:24-27

Paul here compares his preparation for sharing the gospel with an athlete, such as a runner or a boxer.

- What reason does Paul give for a runner to run in a race?
- List the principles and characteristics that are necessary for a successful athlete—such as a boxer or a runner. (Paul mentions self-control, goal setting and discipline.)
- Are these principles and characteristics similar to those needed for successfully sharing the gospel? In what ways?
- Can we practice sharing our faith as an athlete practices her sport?
- Have you ever written out your personal testimony?
- What role does prayer play? Is this a discipline?
- What role does failure play in the training of a successful athlete? Does fear of “failure” hold us back from sharing our faith?
- What other benefit is gained from the disciplines needed for someone seeking to purposefully share their faith? (vs 27)

Application

Discuss the personal, practical, daily application of each of these quotes from C.S. Lewis

"A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading."

- What books made a difference in your journey to faith in Jesus Christ?
- Have you ever share them with others?
- Do you have extra copies for this purpose?

"Don't use words too big for the subject. Don't say "infinitely" when you mean "very"; otherwise you'll have no word left when you want to talk about something really infinite."

- What words could be considered Christian jargon that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted by the non-Christian? What alternative words could be used?
- How did Jesus explain spiritual truth?
- What role did questions play in Jesus' interaction with others?
- What questions should we be asking?

"Experience: that most brutal of teachers. But you learn, my God do you learn."

"Failures are finger posts on the road to achievement."

- What role does fear play in your hesitation to share your faith?
- What role does pride play?
- How would you define "failure" in sharing your faith?
- How can you overcome a "failure" in sharing your faith?

"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."

- What role does our lifestyle play in our role as a witness for Christ?
- How does thinking with an eternal perspective affect the love shown in the present?
- How can we best link our acts of love and a purposeful sharing of the reason "for the hope that is in you"? (1 Pet 3:15)

"It's so much easier to pray for a bore than to go and see one."

- How will you get out of your comfort zone to make reach out in relationship with someone whom you do not always see eye-to-eye?
- What should be our prayer with someone Lewis describes as a "bore"?

"What saves a man is to take a step. Then another step."

- What are the "steps" in salvation?
- How can we help people with whom we come in contact take the next step?
- How do we know what that step is?
- Think back to your own response to the Truth of the gospel. What steps were involved?

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

- What specific goal will you set for yourself to become intentional in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ?

"Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours."