

MODERN PROBLEMS ANCIENT SOLUTIONS

LESSONS FROM THE PSALMS & PROVERBS

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

November 16-22, 2025 | Fall Week 8

ANNOUNCEMENTS

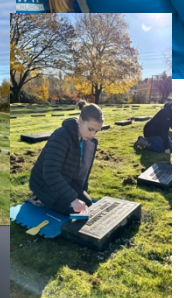
Well, hey there Life Group Leaders!! Welcome to this week's leadership guide for Gateway's Life Groups. We're in week #8 of our Fall 2025 season.

1. YOUR EIGHT MEETING:

- As a heads up, next week, we'll be preparing our feedback forms to send out to all our group members, as a way to hear about how the season went for your group! It's very helpful tool for us to plan for the coming seasons, to gauge the spiritual health and activity of our church family, and to assess our leadership needs going into the next season.
- When those come out, if you all would encourage your members to complete them, that would be super helpful!

2. PICTURES AT SERVE SITES?

- A number of your groups have gone out into our city serving in fantastic ways – at the food bank, at the Life Recovery Store – did you snap some pictures? Email or text them to pastor Adam.
- Picture on the top right, is the UNRAU group, the upper middle two are the GORTER/LUYMES group – both serving at Life Recovery Thrift Store. The bottom middle is the VAANDRAGER/VANDOP group at Hazelwood Cemetery cleaning gravestones, and the lowest picture is the ROOS group serving a meal at 5and2 Ministries.
- All this empty white space below here is reserved for more of your groups in action!! Let's fill the whole space!!



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

LEADER NOTE: These are the lowest risk questions and are great ways to get everyone in your group talking – from those who love sharing stories, to those who feel a little uncomfortable in this new space. Low risk questions have their way of breaking the ice and getting everyone a little more comfortable sharing. It also gives a chance for everyone to share in an easy, approachable way.

1. Have you ever found cash on the ground? How much? What did you do with it?

LEADER NOTE: This is a good way to get conversation going around the topic of financial stewardship, and the Lord's call on our lives to live generously with the gifts that He has given us. While not everyone in your group may have found cash on the ground, they could easily surmise what they might do – invite your members to go there!

2. Have you ever been the recipient of someone's generosity? What was that like for you?

LEADER NOTE: Continuing in the same way, this question gets your members considering what it's like to be on the receiving end of someone else's generosity, which will prepare everyone's hearts for the conversations to come. This question, you might just have to put out to the whole group, and let those who have answers, to share, while others listen to the experiences and consider for themselves what being a recipient could feel like.

QUICK REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: These following two questions aim to have your group reflect upon Sunday's message. The first question will always be the same, and the second one is provided from our teaching pastor from the service.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

LEADER NOTE: Leaders, "*lead by example*" in your own use of these resources. Ahead of Sunday services, be sure to grab a guide in the lobby, fill it out during the message, scratch down extra thoughts and notes you might have, and bring it with you to your Life Group meetings.

2. This weekend, Pastor Justin noted the four most common source idols we grapple with: *comfort, security, control, and acceptance*. Which of these do you gravitate toward most? What would it look like this week to put God first in that specific area?

LEADER NOTE: n/a

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: Reading scripture together is one of the most important practices in our Life Groups, so never shirk away from reading the following passage, always making time to interact with the Word of God and its message for us. As leaders, you can read the passage yourselves, invite others to read the whole text, or go around the room from paragraph to paragraph. Over time, as you lead, you'll see what works best. Always say "*thank-you*" to those who read out loud – it's not everyone's favourite thing to do.

These questions that follow, will be the same throughout the semester. And if you're familiar with the "*Triad Questions*" from over the years, these are changed up a bit – simplified, and with slightly different emphases.

READ Proverbs 3:9-10, Matthew 6:19-21

1. How does this passage highlight God's presence in our world?
2. What does this passage say about our broken human condition?
3. How does this passage call me to make change in my life?

Another option with these questions, is to even more simply ask, once you've read the passage together, as in a general way, "*What strikes us about this passage?*"

DIGGING DEEPER

LEADERS NOTE: These discussion questions generally start simple and gradually become deeper and more complex. This progression follows natural discussion patterns, but as leaders, you know your group best. Use this guide flexibly; it is not necessary to cover every question. Focus on ensuring everyone is heard and has the opportunity to contribute and ask their questions.

1. READ Proverbs 3:9-10. How have you been taught by parents, teachers, pastors, and/or other churches about giving of our "*first fruits*"? What principles did you learn from them? Are there any patterns you still follow?

LEADER NOTE: As we have been talking about the reality that Solomon was a father, and how he is spending a considerable amount of time writing out his wisdom for his children, namely his son, we have been challenged to also consider how we might be passing along wisdom to the next generation, or to those who are young in faith. This question puts us in the seat of the "*son*" in the context of Proverbs 3, where there have been others – like parents, pastors, and teachers – who have all dedicated their lives to showing us the way through life.

This principle of giving of our "*first fruits*" comes up in **Exodus 23**, in the block of text that the Lord is outlining life principles – and laws – for the Israelites to follow, so that they would live into the reality of being God's chosen nation, set apart, to show the world just who God is. While Moses has been writing about rules for living in Community, he's also writing about laws for the sabbath, and for their celebrations. In there, at **Exodus 23:19** it is written, "*The best of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.*" Which tells the Israelites that the first bundle of wheat that they cut from the field, they're to give to the Lord. The first batch of carrots and potatoes that they pull from the ground, they're to give to the Lord. It's not the second or third batch – but the first. It's the batch that they give when they're still feeling the hunger pains in their stomachs, when they're considering what to bring to the market in order to sell.

This practice isn't just to be sacrificial; it's a recognition that what God gives to His people – is first His. As it's all His. When "*first fruits*" are given, God's people are also taught to trust that the Lord will provide the second, and third batches. **Leviticus 23:14** outlines this practice further, saying, "*And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.*"

- **READ 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.** According to this passage, how generous should we be? What does Paul say our generosity will produce?

LEADER NOTE: Paul doesn't explicitly outline a particular sum of money, or a percentage that all believers must give back to the Lord. Paul does indicate that followers of God have to look closely at the Lord's gifts that been received, and to respond accordingly – out of a desire to see God glorified, and to see His kingdom expanded.

Paul tells his audience that God will respond by enriching the giver and will supply for their needs. But as it says in verse 6, *"whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."* So, it appears that there is a co-relation between the act of giving, and the act of receiving. But it must be said that if you offer \$20 to someone else, as a gift to the Lord, you're not guaranteed to find another \$20 on the ground around the next corner. What this means, is that the Lord will see your generosity, help you be fulfilled by giving the gift, and will supply for your needs too, as they arise.

- **ADDITIONAL QUESTION: READ HC-Q&A#125.** How do these words emphasize all that you've learned about your finances?

LEADER NOTE: Here's the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A#125:

Q. What does the fourth petition mean?

A. *"Give us this day our daily bread"* means:
Do take care of all our physical needs
so that we come to know
that You are the only source of everything good,
and that neither our work and worry
nor Your gifts
can do us any good without Your blessing.
And so, help us to give up our trust in creatures
and trust in You alone.

These words push and urge us to further see the picture of God's provision, and that it is He who gives and provides for those in need.

2. READ Proverbs 2:4-5. Generosity and trust go hand in hand. God invites us to see all we have, as His, given to us, for His glory. What helps you recognize that you're making a choice to be generous out of trust, rather than fear?

LEADER NOTE: It's interesting to see the differences in the word *"fear"* in this question, and in the scripture text – it's important to see that they're different. In the question, the *"fear"* is to be understood in the negative, perhaps someone is being generous in order to manipulate God, or to attempt to control their future, rather than trust that the Lord, in His provision will take care of all their needs. The *"fear"* in the text is rooted in actual fear, but in a positive sense. It's rooted in a deep respect for the Lord, it's a posture of humble worship, and actually – it's a sense of acknowledging a trust in the Lord.

This is where followers of God are deeply challenged to assess the state of their hearts as they are giving of their finances and of themselves. One good question to ask is, *"would I be this generous, if no one would ever find out?"* The answer may reveal a posture of the heart that is godly, or ungodly. If we're

giving just to be seen by others, we'll see quickly, an ungodly posture; whereas if we're giving privately, and solely for the Glory of God, we'll see humble and godly posture.

Consider in this conversation the story in **Acts 5:1-11**, where Ananias and Sapphira were giving out of fear – and not trust. They tried to manipulate the system for the praise and admiration of their peers, rather than from a generous posture of doing what they could in order to give God glory, and to grow His kingdom. Then go back a chapter and consider the difference in their community in **Acts 4:32-35**, where people were giving of themselves and their resources, and trusting that they'd continue to be there for each other, through God's provision.

- **READ Philippians 4:18-19.** Have you ever seen or personally experienced God's faithfulness in meeting the needs of those who chose to give generously?

LEADER NOTE: This is a time now to share about where we have seen the Lord at work and how others have been blessed by others, or how we have experienced God's provision – through His generous people. Encourage your members to share stories, but also to praise God for His good work.

- **READ James 1:5-8, 1 Timothy 6:6-10.** When asked to give, our tendency can be to withhold. What words do *you* find in these texts that comfort and encourage *you* to be generous?

LEADER NOTE: We've been repeatedly reminded that we're selfish people, who posture ourselves in our lives, for ourselves. So, when we're challenged to think otherwise, it can be a stretch. However, scriptures are abundantly clear that there is much blessing in a posture of giving. James highlight for us that God will give wisdom in these decisions, suggesting that God will guide us through who to give to, and how much. He'll make it clear! And as Paul writes to Timothy, we're told that we have our needs met when our stomachs are full, and we're kept warm, everything else is a bonus! And that everything else, is meant to be shared with others who find themselves in need. It's really all a matter of perspective that we in the 21st century, in North America – in a time and place where there is much to be had, and much to be enjoyed – which means that there is much to be shared.

3. READ Proverbs 11:24, 13:11. Wise stewardship includes prudence, honesty, and faithfulness in the daily management of what God provides. In what ways do you see following God shape your financial decisions? Can you give an example?

LEADER NOTE: Leaders, talking about finances might not be your groups favorite thing to do, as we've made our financial postures a very inner and personal matter. People don't like to be judged for what they have and what they do not give. People don't like to showcase that they don't have much, and desire more. While your members might talk here in theoretic terms, don't be afraid to communicate to your group that these are safe places, designed to help "*iron sharpen iron.*" They're places for God's people to sort out – with fear and trembling – the ways of life that God has called us to live. Lead your group in this way!

- **READ HC-Q&A#110-111 (on reverse) & Philippians 4:12-13.** The essence of theft is discontentment, i.e., "*I want more.*" What role then, does contentment play in stewarding godly generosity?

LEADER NOTE: First off, a slight apology for the lack of clarity in the printed Sermon Guide, for the words, "*on reverse.*" You might have to point out to your members that the Q&A's are on the reverse of the

sermon guide. The act of theft and stealing, according to God's word, is an outright sin – it's there in the ten commandments, which is what the Catechism teaches. While it discusses what is all wrong in stealing, and that it's not just limited to the act of taking something that is not yours, it further outlines that we're to seek the good of our neighbors, to uphold and honor them, as we would like to be treated ourselves. Take those phrases into consideration as you then read the passage from Paul, about being content in the Lord's provision – and recognizing once again, that all we have is from the Lord.

In this culture of “*want*” and “*desire*” where we were constantly told to get the next phone, the new car, the bigger house, the larger boat, or travel to that other new place – we have a hard time making the distinction between God's provision and our ability to get what we desire. As we see what it is that we have, and what we are able to offer to others – we'll see more than just the new things – but a real joy in deepening relationship here on earth and deepening eternal relationship with the Lord.

This is what Jesus was teaching in **Matthew 6:21**, where He says, “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”

- **ADDITIONAL QUESTION: READ Proverbs 21:14.** How do we use our generosity in manipulative ways? How do those actions lead us astray?

LEADER NOTE: As we give, there might be postures in our hearts where we say, “*If I give this \$200, I'll be sure to get \$200 more later.*” It's where we tie too strongly together the risk and reward – as God doesn't work like that. He might, when He sees fit, but it's not a rule that we can really on – as this is us distorting God's desire for us to trust in His provision, and to trust in His timing of that provision. When we try to manipulate God and put our desires on Him like this, it's us exercising our desire to be our own sovereign selves, rather than trusting in God's sovereignty over us.

TAKING IT HOME

READ Philippians 4:4-9, Romans 12:1-8. What is your biggest barrier to living generously? How might God be inviting you to use what He's given, your time, talents, or treasures to show generosity? How can your Life Group or church family, support and encourage one another to live out faithful stewardship?

LEADER NOTE: These two texts are great ones for us to close this conversation around financial stewardship, and God's call upon our lives to be generous with all that He has given us. Paul writing to the Philippians encourages us to see all the joy in life that God is inviting us to pursue – of which we're to find in seeking to follow God's direction. And as Paul writes to the Romans, he reflects on very similar realities, but highlights more so that this is all what we've been created for, and this way of living is one that will show the world the community of faith that we have in each other, and in God.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

LEADER NOTE: This following question is completely optional and is intended for the participants' personal reflection. But do feel free to explore using the question within your groups meeting.

READ Proverbs 14:21 & 31, 1 Kings 14:21-30. Solomon invokes the sense of caring for neighbors upon his son, who clearly didn't heed these wise words, and “*did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.*” Are there any moments in your life that you need to reflect on, where your patterns and actions might not have lined up with biblical generosity? What patterns do you need to commit to changing?