

WALKING with JESUS

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

October 4-10, 2026 | Fall Week 2

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Here we are, getting into the pattern of the fall season. We've now mostly have our first meetings behind us, our new fall schedules are under way, and the rhythms of life are once again finding their balance! Here's a few things to consider as we head into this second week:

1. YOUR SECOND MEETING:

- This is where the tone you set in the first week gains traction!
- If you have some new members, remember that they're still getting to know your group, and the system of Life Groups here at Gateway, so be sure to be clear about how you lead and how you direct conversations and discussions. Make sure that they know where to find our materials, and how we hope to walk through the same material as a whole church.
- As well, follow your time commitments, honoring your members and their lives and schedules.
- In the notes last week, we talked a little about our times of prayer – if you didn't spend a lot of time in prayer in week #1, week #2 will be your opportunity to lead that moment well. And given the early stage in our season, and your members will just be getting comfortable with all this again, take it easy, and be confident in yourselves, as leaders, to lead these moments.

2. SERVE PROJECTS:

- We have curated a list of serve sites and opportunities across our city – have a look [HERE](#), and sign up for an event that grabs everyone's interest. Some dates are flexible; others are pre-booked – connect with pastor Adam to start planning your Serve event.
 - There is a new opportunity this season, and that is to provide a meal for the Alpha program that is being hosted at our church, every Tuesday, until the end of November. There's been a few nights booked up already – but if you're keen on the idea, you can [SIGN UP HERE](#).
 - Here's what we've got so far... thanks so much to those of you who have signed up! Looks like we're in good shape for the coming 4 weeks. We're now looking to fill the last four! **Any takers?**
 - We are told that the group has "healthy" appetites!! So, consider over preparing!
 - As well, please consider serving the meal and then interacting with the group over their ALPHA video while they eat, and then cleaning up afterwards.
 - Remember, if costs are prohibitive, let pastor Adam know, and our Life Groups budget will cover it.

Week 4	Tuesday, October 6	Hilderman's	Tacos + dessert
Week 5	Tuesday, October 13	Baars/DeJong	Pasta
Week 6	Tuesday, October 20	Chantelle Arends	Chili & Buns with baking
Week 7	Tuesday, October 27	Dykshoorn/Arends	Burgers, Salad, baking

Week 8	Tuesday, November 3	open
Week 9	Tuesday, November 10	open
Week 10	Tuesday, November 17	open
Week 11	Tuesday, November 24	open

- As well, we have our **SERVE SHIRTS** ready for your members, so send your newest members to the HUB to get theirs, or if any of your members need a new one – they can feel free to grab one. We’ve got youth sizes XS-L, and adult sizes S-XXXL.

3. PICTURES:

- We love seeing what you’re all up to! Take pictures of your group in your meeting spaces, gathered around the kitchen counter with their snacks and drinks, and your group out having fun, and serving together – then share them with Pastor Adam – via email or text.
- Would you consider snapping a group selfie at your first meeting and sharing that with Pastor Adam?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

LEADER NOTE: As you get discussion going, remember that one of the key emphases of our Life Groups ministry is to build *meaningful relationships*. When we start our discussions with heavy topics, people who have come who are feeling a little hesitant or even a little trepidatious about contributing, may feel immediately unwelcome. Therefore, we do our best to start our conversations in achievable ways for everyone in the room. These questions are meant to do just that.

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. If you could pick up any new skill at this very moment, what would it be?

LEADER NOTE: As we get this first conversation going, you as leader get to choose how to do that. Read the room, look for those hesitant and worried faces. If you see them, lead this question with a little open-endedness: ask the question, and then, say, “*let’s hear from anyone, but we want to hear from everyone!*” That sets the tone that we’re hoping to have every voice contribute something, but allows everyone to find their place.

Whereas, if you see that confidence and readiness to contribute from everyone, then you can steer the conversation more intentionally: ask the question, and then say, “*let’s hear from everyone by going around the room.*”

2. When you hear the word “*treasure*” what comes to mind first? Is it a possession, an experience, a relationship, a memory, something else?

LEADER NOTE: We can interpret the word treasure in a variety of ways – and your members will do exactly that as they share their answers. And really, there’s no wrong answers at this point. What you will start seeing, is what your members place value upon, which will help you understand a little of their perspective as they approach life, faith, and relationships.

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. One thing that we want to be clear as we approach this section, is that this isn't to be a time to evaluate the message or the one delivering it, but it's to be a time when we talk about what we have learned or how we've been challenged by God's Word.

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. Pastor Justin introduced another layer to these parables: while Jesus is our treasure, we are also the treasure He willingly gave up everything to redeem. What then does it mean to live as someone of value who belongs to Jesus?

LEADER NOTE: This week, Pastor Justin offers us this question to consider as we reflect on what he has felt the Lord prepare him to share with us on Sunday morning.

SCRIPTURE REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: Aside from building relationships, reading scripture together is one of the most important practices in our Life Groups; so never shirk away from reading the following passage. Always make time to interact with the Word of God and its message for us.

READ Matthew 13:44-46

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 Matthew 13:44. In this chapter, there are a number of parables where Jesus shares about the Kingdom of God (or Heaven) in more succinct terms. Now here, it's *hidden*. Why do you think Jesus chose to share this parable with this metaphor, at this point in the chapter?

LEADER NOTE: In chapter 13, we first come across Jesus sharing the parable of the Sower, where the seeds being sown fall upon a variety of soils, and it was clear that there was a variety of receptivity of the recipients, and it was also clear about the characters in the story as Jesus further interpreted the parable for His disciples. Then Jesus does the same things with the parable of the weeds, where again we have the picture of a farmer doing their work, but this time a thief does their work, and it is clear about what happens with both the wheat and the weeds. Then we see with the mustard and the yeast that the kingdom, as something that will start small will have a huge impact. In these parables, there's nothing hidden, there's not real mystery.

But now here in v.44, the treasure is hidden, it isn't as obvious as the seed being sown, or as a mustard plant growing in a field. The reality is that God's kingdom isn't always going to be obvious or overt. It could even be something that subtle, and easy to miss. It could be a still and quiet voice.

What is interesting here is that Jesus doesn't tell us why this man was searching in the field – perhaps he knew that through chains of ownership, that some prior landowner would have buried some of their wealth. Either way, he found treasure, and gave up everything he had, in order to gain access to it. Once the value was known, everything changed, and this man was filled with joy in order to make this exchange, but really, it's not about the field, but all about finding something of great value that was worth giving up everything.

The reader is left challenged in how they are searching for something of value in life, and perhaps even challenged about where they are searching for it.

- **READ Psalm 73:21-26, Philippians 3:4-8.** When we recognize God's kingdom as a gift and a treasure, how does that change the way we see ourselves?

LEADER NOTE: As the Psalmist writes, the reader gets the impression that life's challenges and weight has gotten pretty real, and they're struggling with whether God knows their burdens at all – as their challenge feels endless. While their struggle is very real, the author does remind themselves of God's nearness, and how He has never let them go, and that God is really all they have. Then there is the Apostle Paul as he was writing to the Philippians, a letter deeply rooted in encouraging words, he recognizes in himself the life of vanity he has pursued as a devout and respected Jewish leader – and he lost all of that, because of Jesus, and in order to gain Christ. Both Asaph and Paul here recognize the love of the Lord for themselves, and how because they are His, that they have this inherent value, that is granted to them, simply because God choose to do so.

As we navigate the complexities of this life today, your members might at times find themselves struggling with accepting this inherent value – or put different – accepting their full assurance of God's grace. It is a good reminder to all of God's people, that it was He who initiated the relationship with His people; that it was Him who was in full pursuit of humanity, and not the other way around.

So, we need to start seeing ourselves more succinctly as His children, and citizens of His kingdom – of heaven, rather than a people unto ourselves.

2. READ Matthew 13:44-46. What similarities and differences do you notice between the person who finds the hidden treasure and the merchant who was searching for the pearl?

LEADER NOTE: While the parables come to us one after another, they can sound quite similar at their first reading, as both characters notice that the item of value wasn't obvious, they respond with a full

commitment to gain the object for themselves, they respond with some element joy, not just obligation, and they note that the found treasure is worth the sacrifice it takes to get it.

However, the point here is that while one character stumbles upon the treasure, the other the treasure is being sought after – telling us that no matter how someone comes to understand the value of faith – whether you’ve grown up with it all along, or you came later to the party – the response is to be the same. We must recognize that our relationship with Christ is worth everything we’ve got.

- **READ Matthew 19:16-22.** What makes this exchange between Jesus and the rich young ruler the same, or different, than the two short parables in chapter 13?

LEADER NOTE: We need to recognize that the two parables in chapter 13 are just that, parables – they’re stories with a point. In Matthew 19, we get to peak in on an actual conversation between Jesus and this man – someone who was searching for something more, for something of meaning and value in his life that was going to be more than doing just the right things. He was good at following the law, he obeyed the rules, but he was missing out on whom the rules and laws were pointing to.

Jesus tells this young man that in order to experience this something more, he’d have to strip himself of all that he had. To come completely undone, in order to see his full need in front of Jesus. But, unlike the characters in the parables, this man, doesn’t see the value in Christ, he can’t let go of the value he has in himself. He assumes his personal value is greater than Christ’s – and he “*went away sorrowful.*”

He couldn’t do it.

He couldn’t find this same joy in what Jesus was inviting him to.

Even though the cost was very real, the parables characters were able to swallow their pride, and let go of what held them, because following Jesus means surrendering all that we have to Him.

- What might Jesus be teaching us about the relationship between seeing the kingdom’s value and surrendering something for it?

LEADER NOTE: This is the tricky part for us humans, Jesus is pointing out for us that we don’t so easily find ourselves willing to separate from the things that we value. We don’t share, we don’t give of ourselves, we fail at generosity, we continually think of what the world can do for us, and not the other way around. The relationship between the kingdom’s value, and our surrender – needs to be just that. Surrendering what we value on earth, so that we can gain what is more valuable in Christ.

3. READ Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42, & 47-50. Before and after these two short parables, Jesus parallels the “*wheat*” and the “*good fish*.” What do these parables reveal about the hope of those who belong to Christ?

LEADER NOTE: While these two parables paint a grim picture for the “*weeds*” and “*bad fish*,” their thrust is clearly weighted on those who are the wheat, and those who are the good fish – as it is those who are claimed to be in Christ, and those who will be preserved through the coming time of judgement, in whatever that will look like. There is further assurance of God’s drawing of His people to Himself, in Paul’s closing words to the Thessalonians, he writes at 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, “*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; **He will surely do it.***”

Paul understands that as Christ is painting these pictures of separation to come, between those who are His, and those who are not, he is clear that God will complete the work, no one who are His will be left behind, no one who are His will be left to fend for themselves. All will be loved, cherished, and deeply cared for within His presence.

- These parables also reveal the fate of the “weeds” and “*bad fish*.” Who in your life are you praying will come to Christ, and how might God use you in their journey toward Him?

LEADER NOTE: As we regularly engage as a community in our church initiative of “**Who’s Your Four?**” – we’re reminded of our call to be praying the lost souls who we know in our communities. This question has us consider once again those whom the Lord is drawing towards us, so that, they might come to know His love for them – through us. We start by **praying**, asking the Lord to reveal to us the names and faces. Then we seek to **invest** in those relationships – to kindle friendship, to foster respect, and mutual encouragement. Which will lead us to places where we can **invite** our new friends to a place of faith.

TAKING IT HOME

READ Psalm 34:8, 1 Peter 2:1-3, & Hebrews 12:1-3. Where has pursuing Christ felt like *giving something up*? Where has it felt *joyful*? What competing priorities, desires, or distractions, are keeping you from living as though Jesus and His Kingdom are truly worth everything?

LEADER NOTE: The reality that we may need to acknowledge here is that the life of following Jesus doesn’t always feel joyful. There often comes great costs to following Him – some of which includes giving up already good things, in order to experience more of His good things. Note the distinction, that the good things we desire and long for, are rarely the good things the He is preparing for us.

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 Galatians 5:19-26. As you look at the fruit of the Spirit, take an honest look at your patterns and rhythms in life. Consider the good and joy filled days, and ask yourself where God might be wanting to multiply good fruit in your life for His kingdom ? Consider the hard and difficult days, and ask where might God be inviting you to let go of something that is holding you back and make room for the Spirit to grow something new in you??