



## LIFE GROUP LEADERS!

### ⇒ YOUR THIRD MEETING:

- Now that we're in our third week, we want to make sure that we've had this conversation around our commitments to each other – that what happens in our groups, stays in our groups. The stories, the reflections, the prayer requests, unless invited, need to remain in those moments. Along with that commitment, our Covenant, helps us guide our newest members into the safety of our Life Groups.
- You can find the covenant and supporting documents on the Leaders Tool's page [HERE](#), within the FACILITATOR/HOST DOCUMENT.

### ⇒ ATTENDANCE:

- Please, each week, follow the BLUE button in the reminder email to fill out your attendance!! And if you can, go back to missed weeks to enter all that in!

### ⇒ SERVE PROJECTS:

- Going into our third week, please make sure you have a look at the serve options we've set up for our groups to lean into. The list has been updated, new dates booked, and even a new ministry for us to try out!
- Find the list here: <https://gatewaycrc.org/grow/serve-projects>
- For your new members, be sure to send them to the HUB in the Lobby, to grab a new SERVE shirt!
- **NEW SERVE IDEA!**
  - On Thursday February 15<sup>th</sup>, our church is hosting the [Fun&Faith DATE NIGHT](#), comedy tour! It's a clean night of comedy and was a riot to host a number of years ago. We're looking for several volunteers to help with merchandise and ticket sales. Maybe your group would consider this as an option to serve?? Let me know, and I'll share more details with you. Volunteers also get free tickets to the event.
  - Email or call me, if you'd be keen on that idea!

### ⇒ BOOK CONTEST:

- I didn't receive any pictures of groups from their first meetings, so there is no draw this week. However, I do still have two books to give away, that I'd like to get into your hands, just to help you all (1) understand where we're learning in this series (2 Samuel For You), and (2) to understand how we are striving to organize our community at Gateway (Sticky Church).
- The first two leaders to send me a text or email with some reflections about their first two weeks of groups, will receive such books!



## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**LEADER NOTE:** These are the lowest risk questions! Have fun exploring past experiences of life, and how your members spend their time now! However, as your group gets more and more comfortable with the deeper conversations, limit your time here.

1. What's your favorite scent? What does it remind you of?

**LEADER NOTE:** Use these two questions to warm your members to the fun of discussion!

2. Do you have a favorite plant or flower? What is it, and why?

**LEADER NOTE:** n/a



## QUICK REVIEW

**LEADER NOTE:** These are two questions that have your group reflecting upon last 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:** n/a

2. This weekend, Pastor Justin talked about the prevalence of "*Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*" which is the idea where God wants people to be good, nice, and fair so that they can go to heaven when they die. Why do you think this is such a powerful view in Christian culture today?

**LEADER NOTE:** Pastor Justin talked about a man named **Christian Smith** who devoted many years of his life to researching Christian religion among youth. This study came out in 2004 but is probably even more applicable today as this trend continues. Smith looked very closely at the religious beliefs held by American and Canadian teenagers and, after conducting more than 3000 interviews, he found that faith came down to something that he called "**Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.**" This is a term that has been used a lot over the last 20 years. Here are the main themes of this type of faith:

1. **Purpose** – The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one's self.
2. **Relationship with God** – God does not need to be particularly involved in my life except when He is needed to resolve a problem.
3. **Salvation** – Good people go to heaven when they die.
4. **Motives** – God wants people to be good, nice, and fair (heaven is the dangling carrot).

But even though some parts of that sound really good, that isn't the gospel. It treats God as transactional. So, here is the Gospel according to 2 Samuel 7:

1. **Purpose** – The central goal of life is to glorify God
2. **Relationship with God** – God means to dwell with His people.
3. **Salvation** – By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
4. **Motives** – Obedience to be the fruit of our faith in Jesus.

See, most of us think that it's people's sin that keeps them out of heaven. But it is just as easy to run from God through our good deeds. **It is often our pride that keeps us from throwing ourselves on the mercy seat of God.**



## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

**LEADER NOTE:** In these initial weeks of this semester, follow these three questions as scripture is read. Encourage your members to even consider these three questions as they approach scripture on their own time! It's good practice and provides a good and helpful devotional pattern of reflection upon what scripture teaches.

### **READ 2 Samuel 7:1-13**

1. What does this passage say about the character of God?
2. What does this passage say about fallen humanity and the world we are in?
3. Where does this passage specifically expose sin or unbelief in my own life? How does it specifically call me to change my thinking, redirect my affections, replace behaviors, and trust in my Savior?



## DIGGING DEEPER

**1. READ 2 Samuel 7:2-6.** When you've asked the Lord for something, His replies usually take shape in either a "Yes!" "No," or "Not yet." What is something that you have asked God for, where you've heard Him answer one of these ways? What was that like?

**LEADER NOTE:** This is a time old question, "*How do I know the Lord is answering my prayers?*" The most basic way to help people understand how the Lord answers prayers, is asking a follow up question, "*Does the answer you think you're hearing, line up with the teaching and authority of scripture?*" For example, someone feels that the answer they're hearing, will lead them to hurt someone. Well, scripture is clear in not causing pain, or our siblings in faith to stumble. That answer doesn't line up with scripture, which would suggest, it's not the Lord's voice. Another example could be that someone is feeling a need for a career change, and the answer they're hearing is leading them to accept a new position in a different company. Scripture tells us that the Lord will guide our paths and will provide direction. This new opportunity could very well be the Lord's answer. Yet another example might have someone asking for healing, and there's no articulate or discernable response, and that may be the Lord's way of saying, "Not yet." As scripture is clear that the Lord can provide healing, it doesn't happen all the time in the ways we expect. Lazarus in **John 11** still faced death. Paul in **2 Corinthians 12** still dealt with a "*thorn in his side.*" All these scenarios are meant to draw us closer to the Lord, and to be more clear that the Lord in His sovereignty will have His way with us.

**2. READ 2 Samuel 7:7.** If God didn't ask for a house to be built for Himself, why did David think it was a good idea to build Him one?

**LEADER NOTE:** David's heart was genuine in his desire to honor God with a home that would house the Ark of God and would be a place of worship for the One and True King of the nation. However, as we read, God essentially tells David that there will be a temple built, but that it wasn't David's job to do so. For David, it was an obvious next step in His kingship, to honor God, and building a temple to Him seemed appropriate. However, David had led the nation to a state of peace, through much loss of life and bloodshed. Look up **1 Chronicles 28:3**, where David identifies more succinctly God's answer.

- **READ Deuteronomy 6:4-6.** What might we do, that we think honors God, but really doesn't?

**LEADER NOTE:** In our lives, we try in so many ways to honor the Lord with our actions and words, and likely, many are filled with all the right intentions, correct words, and honorable thoughts. But, as we see in David's life, he too, was filled with all the right intentions, but God said, *"No, not yet."*

- In our workplaces, we may take the posture of *"I'm going to show up every day, speak well of my colleagues, and do my work well, hoping that people will notice, and ask why I live this way."* When God, really, wants us to start conversations about Him.
- In our communities, we may not engage with the person sitting on their own, thinking that someone else will converse with them, because they have better social skills or more ability to help. When, the Lord is placing that idea on our hearts to run with.
- In our church patterns, we might go to a church service, just to be seen by our families and others, and will evaluate what we are seeing. All the while the Lord desires our hearts of worship.

**3. READ 2 Samuel 7:8-10.** Consider the direction of God's words to David: *"I took..." "I have been..." "I will make ...,"* & *"I will plant..."* What was God wanting David to understand?

**LEADER NOTE:** Pay close attention to God's words, and His following justification of His actions. For example, in the first statement, *"I took you from the pasture ... that you would be prince over my people."* God led David from tending sheep, to leading people. It was God who orchestrated all those circumstances, David had nothing to do with all those decisions, other than being a willing follower. God wanted David to see and understand that He was there from the beginning, that He's been around a lot longer than David has and did not need a physical structure to contain Him. This portion of text echoes the language of **Genesis 12:1-2**, of God's promise to Abram. Which highlights further for us, that God wants us to be more aware of His sovereign hand, which guides all of humanity through life, and back to Himself.

- **READ Matthew 6:31-33.** What does it mean to you that God has always been your Shepherd and Provider?

**LEADER NOTE:** Here we put ourselves in David's shoes, and see the Lord as we look back upon our lives as the Shepherd who has guided us from point A to point B. From pride to humility. From sin to salvation. Encourage the members of your groups to look back in their lives and see just where the Lord has been at work, drawing them closer to Himself. This exercise should grant your members the assurance that as the Lord has acted in kindness and for our provision in the past, so He will do so in our present, and will continue to do into our future.

**4. READ 2 Samuel 7:12-16.** We're told here that a temple will be built, but by someone else; while also, there is an underlying tone that something so much more is happening, than just the building of a physical temple. What is that?

**LEADER NOTE:** This is the beauty of this whole passage, as God makes some promises to David, He also promises a House Leader who will have a name who will last forever, and the safety and provision that will come with that House, will be an everlasting gift. The dual meaning in this context is that a descendant of David will build the temple, who is Solomon; as well, as a further descendant of David will sit on the Throne of God's Kingdom, in perpetuity, who is Jesus Christ.

- **READ Luke 1:30-33.** What assurances are we able to see in the words of the Angel speaking to Mary, that the original audience of 2 Samuel 7 might have missed?

**LEADER NOTE:** We see here that God will be giving the Throne of David, fulfilling the promise in 2 Samuel 7, to Jesus Christ, child of the Virgin Mary! We see too, that His name will be great, and that his reign will last forever.



## TAKING IT HOME

**READ 2 Samuel 7:18-22.** Here we see David's response to God's answer of "no." What can you learn from David's response to God for the next time that you hear the same answer? Will that be easy or hard to implement? Why is that?

**LEADER NOTE:** David's response is an amazingly humble response to the Lord, as he begins, he even asks, "who am I?" He sees himself as a simple humble servant of the Lord, in no need of recognition, praise, or stature. He simply just wants to see the Lord glorified and honored. He calls himself a "small thing" as well, seeing that the Lord is doing much greater things in His work around him. As the Lord tells us today, "No" or "Not yet," it's best that we embrace the same posture, as everything we have up until this very point, is from the Lord, and it continues to be up to the Lord to provide what He desires, when He desires. Embracing this posture will allow us to wait patiently, all the while expectantly, especially as we leave all our praise at Christ's feet. This posturing will most certainly be difficult, as we are sinful beings, selfish, and full of deceit. We want things our way, in our timing, and to our benefit.

Be sure to close your meeting in a word of prayer holding up each other's joys and sorrows to the Lord.



## 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 Psalm 111.** Write out some promises that you know that God has made to you. Write out also the blessings that He has granted you. As David expressed his gratitude to the Lord for the promises, he received in 2 Samuel 7:18-29, how have you responded to the Lord for surrounding you with His promises and blessings?