



## LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

February 1-7, 2026 | Winter Week 3

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

You're now all finding your rhythm in your groups! It's time to now enjoy the week-to-week engagements with your groups.

#### 1. YOUR THIRD MEETING:

- As these rhythms settle into place, are you keeping in touch with some of your members who said they'd come, but haven't yet? That's an important step to building relationships and making sure that all members are accounted for.
- Also, have you been keeping up with logging your attendance? The email reminder for that comes out just as your group gets meeting, so be sure that once everyone leaves to find the email and check off those boxes!
- If your group cancels an event, be sure to reflect that as well, as there's an option to do so in the same email as the attendance reminder. In that email still click the blue button, "**Take Attendance.**" You'll then see your list of members, then on the left side, click "**Events**", and then click on the date you need to cancel, and under the drop-down box of "**Options**" – click "**Cancel.**" That'll make our logs fully accurate!

#### 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's been a bunch of activity this week with groups planning their SERVE projects.
  - **Dykshoorn/Arends** are making arrangements with a Life Recovery Home for maintenance projects
  - **Unrau** are making arrangements with the Life Recovery Thrift store.
  - **Hilderman** have been trying to book a different time slot at the Food Bank.
  - **Baars/Dejong** are booked in at the Food Bank on March 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - **Gorer/Luymes** are hosting the Date Night comedy tour on February 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - **The Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> date for the Food Bank, Lynden was hoping for a group to take that on, as it sounds like they've got work to be done, and are counting on a group. Let me know if that could work for your group, even with short notice.**
- Don't see your group in the list? Bring up the serve ideas this coming week to plan a time to contribute to the life and times of our city.

## 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. What is the best or nicest compliment you’ve ever received?

**LEADER NOTE:** We’ve probably asked this question before as a “*Getting to Know You*” question – but what’s the harm in recalling and repeating good things!? This study today will have us looking at our actions, and how we respond to events and situations in our community, so what better way to get that conversation going, then by remembering how other people have treated us!

2. As you have come into adulthood, what are some of the family rules that you have maintained? (*What are ones that you left behind?*)

**LEADER NOTE:** We want to be careful that we’re not throwing our families of origin under the bus here, as this question is meant to be more lighthearted than deep. But your members may take this opportunity to share about some of harder realities of growing up. Again, as this study will have us do, we’ll be God’s Word, interacting with the commands that He has given us – ones that we don’t get to pick and choose. So, let’s chat a little about the ones we can pick and choose!

## 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 Adam shared that we’re to never *devalue anyone*, or to *make someone feel worthless*. How else shall we respond to difficult events and situations that play out in the world around us? Why is that such a hard distinction to make sometimes?

**LEADER NOTE:** Pastor Adam said that, while talking about how our Human Righteousness is about living towards others, not against them. He said,

*It’s not just outward compliance that Jesus is seeking in us, it’s inward transformation that He, through the work of the Holy Spirit seeks to accomplish.*

*And what Jesus is getting at here, in the depths of our hearts, is that we're to never devalue someone, we're to never make someone else feel worthless, or that they do not belong here on earth. But yet, we do that all the time.*

We can have such strong knee-jerk reactions to events around us – and while some of those reactions may be warranted, many times they're not. The alternative, is to do what our parents and teachers all through life have been trying to get us to do – “*think before you speak.*” Consider this common acronym to help guide us to think before we speak:

**T** – is what we say TRUE?

**H** – is what we say HELPFUL?

**I** – is what we say INSPIRING?

**N** – is what we say NECESSARY?

**K** – is what we say KIND?

## 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 season. 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 Matthew 5:13-26**

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 5:13-16.** Jesus did not intend the Beatitudes to be followed as a checklist of outward behaviors. He calls us to an inward transformation that results in a life shaped by these qualities. Can you think of someone, past or present, who made a meaningful impact simply by how they lived or worked?

**LEADER NOTE:** So often as we have interacted with God's word, and Jesus' instruction to us, we read it as a “to-do list,” which – on the surface, yes, the Lord does desire to live out our lives in accordance to

His instructions, so it's good to make sure we are doing that. But the Lord never intended on us treating the instructions like we would a grocery list – checking off the items that are in our cart and moving on. That kind of posture would have us easily travel down the roads like the Pharisees did – simply removing God's love and action away from the instruction – and we'll miss the point just like they did. Instead, we're do to what we're doing here – seeking the heart and meaning of the instruction, so that our hearts will be fully transformed, so that we live these out, not out of a sense of duty, but from a sense of passion for serving the Lord.

And in our lives, there have been examples of people who modelled this sense of passion and servitude – and the Lord has put those people in our lives in order to have a better understanding of His invitations to us. So, it's good for us to talk in our groups about the positive examples.

- **READ Galatians 5:22-23.** Here we see the “*fruit*” of a life of inward transformation. Which of Paul's words here would you use to describe yourself? Which words would least likely be used to describe you?

**LEADER NOTE:** This is list as well, is not to be seen as a checklist, where we see each of the items, and check off the ones that we've completed, and then move on to the next. Paul's instruction to us comes at 5:16, where he tells us to “*walk in the Spirit*,” then all these qualities will come as a result of that pursuit. However, it is still good for us to talk about which fruit, or which evidence, we have the tendency to exude in our daily patterns, and which ones we tend to not. Doing such an exercise may highlight for ourselves areas of our lives that we have not fully opened to the work of the Spirit.

**2. READ Matthew 5:17-20.** Just as any parent would set rules and boundaries for their children, God gave His people the Law and the Prophets. What do those instructions reveal about the kind of relationship God desires with His people?

**LEADER NOTE:** God's law that He gave to His people when they found themselves there in the wilderness after they escaped the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt, was not just to help them manage their day to day lives, it was to guide them in a sure-fire way to see His heart, and to see His love, and to experience His grace. The reality with rules, laws, and regulations – especially the ones that we have in our families – come out of a parents love for their child. The teen has an evening curfew, to make sure that they are safe at home at the right time. The child has limited screen time, in order to preserve and develop their imagination. The family eats dinner together, in order to foster open conversation and shared experiences. All these “*rules*” are born out of the love a parent has for their children.

God has set up these laws out of His love for us, to protect us, to preserve us, and to guide us back into a deep fulfilling relationship with Him. When we put other gods in front of God, we generate disorder in our lives, with the focus in the wrong place. When people are murdered, human relationship is broken, and we put distance between us and God. When we steal and when we covet, we're saying to God what He has given us, is not enough.

God desires that through these laws, that trust will be built between us and Him, and that behaviors will reflect the posture of our hearts have been affected by His love for us.

- **READ Exodus 20:1-21.** Where do you find it the easiest, or hardest, to trust that God's commands are given out of love?

**LEADER NOTE:** There are some of these laws that are relatively easy to follow – like “*do not murder*.” It should be actually quite simple for us to go through our days and not take the life of a neighbor. However, as we’ve been interacting with the “*Sermon on the Mount*,” the reality of this command goes far deeper, and has us being commanded to not even think ill of someone else, or that the hate that leads to murder, is wrong. In reality, some of these easiest commands, actually become quite difficult to follow.

The other element of this question drives us to consider God’s love within the commands, which may drive us to consider how we view God – do we see that God is a *distant Ruler*? If so, then these commands will feel controlling and restrictive, and we’ll see ourselves fighting against them. However, if we see God as a *loving Father*, then we’ll see the commands as protective and as guidance, steering us in the better directions for life. The big truth in all this, is that we won’t fully trust God in His commands for us, until we trust in His character.

**3. READ Matthew 5:21-26.** True righteousness pursues reconciliation as an act of worship. Can you share a story of reconciliation, that you’ve either heard of, or played a role in?

**LEADER NOTE:** Reconciliation in our times, is something we might not hear of too often, and that really is a sad state of affairs. More often, we hear about how people are feeding and nurturing their grudges, and are proud of how much distance that they’ve placed between themselves and someone else as a result of something hurtful. But Jesus’ words here in **Matthew 5**, and really throughout all the Gospels, perpetually drive us to understand that while we act in one way, we need to face facts, and make a 180-degree switch, and instead of making the situations worse, we’re to focus on repairing, and recovering what was lost.

- What makes reconciliation feel risky or costly to you personally?

**LEADER NOTE:** Facing facts and broken relationship will be hard – there’s no way around it. The first part in reconciliation, is recognizing and owning the fault that we might bear in the brokenness. That fault may not always be there, but if it is, we *must* own it, admit it, and apologize for it. And that’s costly, because we might have to admit and be real with ourselves that we’ve been living one way, and saying something else. We lose out on reputation, we’ll lose out on trust, we’ll lose out on some aspects of growth that we’ve made. We might have to start from scratch – but it’s better to do that, than to face judgement ourselves.

- **READ Genesis 50:15–21.** How did Joseph come to such a place of reconciliation? Would that have been easy or hard for Joseph? How about for his brothers to receive? Why?

**LEADER NOTE:** Joseph’s story through the latter half of the book of Genesis is a thorough telling of one man’s journey of being sold into slavery, and then turned to be 2<sup>nd</sup> in command over the nation of Egypt, and who was the one to ultimately preserve the emerging nation of Israel. But his anger for his brothers who initially sold him never comes up, he never dwells on those hard realities. We never read of him complaining about being a servant or a prisoner. Then when he could have made things right in his human eyes – giving his brother the payback they deserve, he doesn’t. He welcomes them, saves them, and provides home and shelter for them. The brothers at this point did nothing to deserve this kindness and affection, and yet, Joseph shows it. Just like how we today, continue to not deserve God’s love and grace, and yet, He gave it, gives it, and will never stop showing up for us.

## TAKING IT HOME

**READ 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.** Where have you noticed the Holy Spirit shaping your decisions, reactions, and/or priorities? In what ways may Christ's love be compelling you to act this week, in your posture at work, who you talk to, how you spend your free time, etc.?

**LEADER NOTE:** Paul's very familiar words here, "*if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation*" begs to hit us personally, in this moment of conversation. As we'll face the real question of, "*Is Jesus really living and alive in me?*" While the answer to that question can only be succinctly answered by the individual, we don't bring this up to cast doubt, but to be affirmed that as we invite Christ into our hearts – He stays. He doesn't go anywhere. We are then in that moment, transformed in our hearts to have a posture towards Him, but humanly speaking, we are still sin filled and distracted. So, this process of sanctification is ongoing. Like our denominational title suggest, "*reformed*" – gives both a sense that the work of God has been completed, but yet in our hearts, we're still "*reforming*."

It's the hope that through this whole conversation we will all be slower in our reactions to the world around us, that we'll be more tender and patient with all the people we interact with, we'll see what is important to lean into, and we'll see with deeper eyes, the pains of this world.

## 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 1 John 3:1-10.** John lays it on pretty heavy, the need for Christ's followers to turn away from all things evil and sinful. As you read this text, listen to the Holy Spirit's voice, which may sound a little like your conscience. Where do you feel affected? Where are you challenged? What are some of the ways that you need to change? What is your next step?