



Sermon on the Mount

Living for the Kingdom

LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE
March 15-21, 2026 | Winter Week 9

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well leaders, it's week #9 – it's the last one of the Winter season of Life Groups here in 2026!

1. YOUR NINTH MEETING:

- As this season wraps up this week, work with your group to develop some plans to keep building upon the relationships you have been developing over the last 9 weeks. Plan some events to hang out, BBQ's, pool parties with the kids, another serve project, maybe a hike or a picnic in a park ... you name it. Remember that one of the main goals of our Life Groups is to develop and grow meaningful relationships. And hanging out in these ways, is us, doing just that.
- Please remind your group to fill out the [FEEDBACK form](#), we'll be sending that out very soon.

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. As this is the last week of this season of Life Groups, take some time with your group to recount and remember some of the highlights of your last nine weeks of gathering!

LEADER NOTE: It's always a great thing to reflect back upon where we have been, enjoy the moments of recalling laughter and sharing, of good snacks and treats, to times of celebration!

2. Look back through this journey into the Gospel of Matthew – what have you discovered about God? About your faith?

LEADER NOTE: While you reflect back upon the happenings with your group, we want to not only remember good times and good moments, but in doing so, we want to further solidify the growth that we have made as a group, and upon our own journeys of faith.

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: Taking notes and interacting with the message that we hear shared on Sunday mornings is a very helpful practice. As you engage both the listening mind, and the physical act of writing, content is more readily solidified in memory!

2. Jesus says, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” What do your calendar and priorities reveal about what you treasure most?

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. By now, you know the practice that is working well for your group – keep it up! But don't be afraid to change up the patterns too – just don't skip this!

READ Matthew 6:2-4, 19-24

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 6:2-4. In verse 2, the reward is transactional (human recognition), while in verse 4, the reward is relational (Father's response). When we give, how might we lean towards a transactional approach more than a relational one?

LEADER NOTE: It's fascinating to see the differences in the word structure when you peel back the English language, and find the Greek structure behind, and while we have the same word, “reward” repeated twice for us, in Greek, it's actually two different words being used. The first instance, in verse 2, the word is “*misthon*” – which refers to wages, payments for services, salaries and compensation – it's a final and complete transaction. It's a transaction where something was done, and payment is given. The

sense that Jesus gives for us, when we seek human praise, is just that – it’s transactional. It’s “this for that.” And it’s complete. Human recognition is all you get, when that’s all you seek. The second instance of “reward” is “*apodosei*,” which has a more relational sense to it, as money is paid back, as something is returned that is due to be returned. The sense is that God faithfully responds to those who seek Him first.

Today, in the 21st century, we are very much a people who seek “this for that.” There’s always something that we desire to get in return for our contributions. When we loan a tool, we hope that our neighbor will loan something back. When we drive a friend, we look for a contribution of gas money. When we shovel someone’s walk, we hope they’ll rake our leaves. But giving to the needy, Jesus tells us is something that we cannot expect or should anticipate reciprocity on earth, but only through Him.

- **READ 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.** How do Paul’s words clarify *how* we are to give?

LEADER NOTE: Once again, we see that Jesus assumes His disciples and followers will be active in giving, as part of their spiritual rhythms. Paul, as he writes to the Corinthians picks up on the same assumptions, saying, “*each one must give...*”. Paul says that this giving is intentional – it’s thought about, its deeply considered, and not done flippantly. Paul says that giving should not be forced, that you cannot be made to give, and that it needs to be out of a response of gratitude for what the Lord has done. Paul says that giving should be also joyful, and not just out of reluctance, which emphasises that this happens out of a posture of gratitude of the Lord’s provision, rather than from seeking something in return.

2. READ Matthew 6:19-21, Psalm 62:10-12. While our calendars and priorities reveal a lot about our treasures, what could the difference be, between possessing something, and making something a treasure?

LEADER NOTE: There is a clear difference between *having* wealth and *treasuring* it. Scripture does not say wealth itself is evil but warns against setting our hearts on it. Our trust, security, and identity come from God. To possess something would be us having something to use, a resource that is entrusted to us, and is something that we must steward with responsibility, recognizing that all that we have belongs first, to the Lord. To make something a treasure, suggests that we’re making something the source of our security and identity, that something is getting our deepest affections, and cause us great anxiety to think about losing. To put it more simply,

- **Possession:** *I have this, but it does not have me.*
- **Treasure:** *My heart is attached to this, and losing it would shake my sense of security.*

When it comes to these two vantage points, we should look at all the things we have, and see them only as possessions that they Lord has granted to us, for use in His kingdom; and then we should approach our faith as the sole treasure we have, finding our peace and security there, and there only.

- **READ Acts 20:33-35, James 2:14-17.** Christ’s command for us to “*store up treasures in heaven*” challenges us to consider the ministry and wellbeing of others. How do these two texts influence our thinking and practices of giving?

LEADER NOTE: When Jesus commands us to do anything – it’s never just for fun. The things He challenges us to do, are always for the growth and care of His kingdom. And here in Acts and James, we

see two examples of how the Lord challenges us to care for those who are serving within His kingdom, and for those who need an extension of His mercy.

As Paul travelled and planted churches, he never asked for handouts for the ministry work he was doing, and really, he is known as being a “tent maker.” He had a viable skill, that he travelled with, in order to earn a wage, and fund his mission. In addition to that, Paul taught about how God’s people are instructed to give to the Kingdom, and he became a recipient of such care and gifts, in order to keep the mission advancing. Today, the Lord calls us to similarly respond to the goals of advancing the gospel message throughout this world.

As James writes this incredibly articulate and concise chapter calling his readers to live out their faith in real and tangible ways, he challenges us today, to match our words with actions, and to see that those who are in need are not just encouraged with words, but blessed with gifts from our wallets and pantries.

3. READ Matthew 6:22-23. What might Jesus mean when He connects a “*healthy*” eye with light and an “*unhealthy*” eye with darkness? How could that relate our attitude toward generosity?

LEADER NOTE: Again, it takes a deeper dive into the text, and the original languages to see what Jesus is really getting. On the surface with this passage we can conjure up images in our minds about light coming into our homes through clean windows – more light comes through – verses dirty and darkened windows, where less light comes in. While that’s a helpful metaphor, Jesus is pressing a little deeper, as the word “*healthy*” here, doesn’t describe a robust physical body, free from ailments, but that it describes a generous spirit. The same word comes up in **James 1:5**, where it is said, “*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously.*” Generously, is the same word that is used for “*healthy*” in Matthew 6. So it’s less about physical health, than about a posture of care and compassion. The emphasis that Jesus is pushing here is that when someone is generous with all that they have, they will have a stronger and healthier spirituality.

Whereas when Jesus says, “*unhealthy*” in the NIV, and “*bad*” in the ESV, He’s not just saying that someone is violently sick, but that something has no value, that something is worthless. Jesus uses the same word in the next chapter, **Matthew 7:18**, “*A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.*” Bad, here is the same word as unhealthy in chapter 6, and its sense is something that is evil, envious, malignant, and wicked. It’s not a good thing.

When we put the conversation together about being healthy and generous – we begin to see the correlation between our spiritual health and our tendency to give. When we are open to giving, we see the Lord more clearly. However, if we’re unhealthy, or bad – we’ll see a greater distance placed between us and the Lord, and we’ll become more spiritually blind to the realities of needs around us.

- **READ 1 Timothy 6:17–19.** How does practicing generosity help us grow in trusting God with the things we own?

LEADER NOTE: Practicing generosity shifts our confidence from our possessions to God’s provision. When we give freely, we acknowledge that everything we have ultimately comes from God and is entrusted to us as stewards rather than owners. Over time, the habit of generosity helps to loosen the grip of possessions on our hearts, and increases the sense of our security in God.

TAKING IT HOME

READ Deuteronomy 15:7-11, Matthew 6:24. The Israelites were told to pay attention to the needs of others, and Jesus reminds us that we cannot be divided between our money and our faith. In what ways might God be inviting you not just to give more, but to belong more fully to Him with an undivided heart?

LEADER NOTE: For the nation of Israel, as they were God's original chosen people, to be the people that would usher into the world a ministry of His love and peace, provision and care, they were to adopt a generous lifestyle not to check off the box of giving out of a sense of duty, but to reflect God's loving character to all the surrounding nations. The practice was also to release themselves from their growing sense of greed and entitlement. This nation wasn't so great at doing all they were commanded, and amongst many other reasons, Jesus came in order to show the fuller and complete picture of what a God-honoring life would look like, which would and could not be divided between things of this world and thing of His Kingdom.

Through this conversation God may be challenging us to reflect upon and examine our attachments to the things we have, and to surrender it all to Him.

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 146. The Psalmist recognizes God is praiseworthy, and that He is in the Creator of all things – and then, the Psalmist proclaims that this Praiseworthy and Creator God, cares deeply for those whom He created. Given that Christians often see themselves as the "*hands and feet of Jesus,*" how is it that you are His hands and feet for those in need? What might you need to start? What might you need to do more of?