



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THIS WEEK:⇒ **PREPARATION FOR THIS WEEK:**

- Do the homework and choose questions best suited to your group.
- Listen to the [Audio Guide](#) for more discussion suggestions & thoughts
- Set up your ZOOM meeting and send the link to your group.

⇒ **WINTER 2021 TIPS:**

- **SERMON OUTLINE:**
 - Do you have members who do not always catch all the points within the weekend message? Consider copying and pasting the filled in blanks at the end of this document to them ahead of your group meeting!
- **STAY IN TOUCH:**
 - Do you have a member or two that have not come out at all? Reach out with a phone call on a regular basis to check in, and to help them feel close to their church family! Perhaps ask if there is anything that your Life Group can pray together for?
- **CHURCH CENTER APP:**
 - Have you tried using the app yet for submitting your attendance and communicating with your group?
 - Search for “CHURCH CENTER” in your Apple and Android app stores.

LEADER ANNOUNCEMENTS:⇒ **PICTURES!**

- Post your ZOOM meeting shots!! We want to see those too!
- Remember the #hashtag challenge – posting your pictures on either Facebook or Instagram using #GatewayLifeGroups – to enter your group to win a prize of \$300! (possibly for a skipthedishes order for a social in April!)

⇒ **SERVE PROJECTS:**

- The website gatewaycrc.org/lifegroups/serve has been updated again with a few more options! Be sure to pick a project soon!
- We now have options for LIFE RECOVERY (home and store), FOODBANK, ABBOTSFORD CITY, CYRUS CENTER, & TEEN CHALLENGE.

⇒ **ATTENDANCE:**

- Keep recording your attendance – if your events are cancelled – please cancel them off. If you meet over ZOOM – please record attendance as you normally would.

LEADER INFORMATION:⇒ **WEEKLY LEADER TRAINING:**

- “Active Listening”

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1) If you had to sing karaoke right now, which song would you pick? Why?

DISCUSSION TIP: Use this opening question to get your group talking as you’re all getting settled into your ZOOM meeting, as it’s a very low-risk way to get full engagement from all people. Go around the ‘room’ specifically inviting your members to respond.

2) As a child or teen, what is something that you regularly got in trouble for? Looking back as an adult, what did you learn from those experiences? If you have children, what do you want them to learn from these experiences?

LEADER NOTE: We have all broken the rules and fallen short of living out the expectations of our God, of our parents, and of each other. Use this question to guide your group into talking about the message that we just heard on the 10 Commandments.

QUICK REVIEW

LEADER NOTE: These two questions have your group reflecting back upon last Sunday’s message.

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: This is where you can find the opportunity to invite your members to be following along with the messages, with the sermon outlines that we provide. They are great tools to help listeners engage with what they are hearing! Lead by example! If your members are still unsure about where to find the resource, show them!

2) This past week Pastor Justin showed us that there are two ways we might treat the law inappropriately. First, we might use the law as a way to justify ourselves and condemn others. Second, we might now use it as a license to sin since Christ has defeated the power of sin and death. Which of these two do you think are more prevalent in our Christian culture today? Why?

GOD'S STORY - TRIADS

LEADER NOTE: These are three questions that we ask each week, and have us look at each passage we study through the same lens.

[READ Deuteronomy 5:6-21, 24-29](#)

- 1) **GOD** - What does this passage say about the character of God?

- 2) **THE WORLD** - What does this passage say about fallen humanity?

- 3) **ME** - 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 my behaviors, and trust my Savior?

DIGGING DEEPER

DISCUSSION REMINDER: As you prepare for your group time coming up this week, take a moment to reflect on what kinds of questions your group has really enjoyed over your first four weeks. Be sure to lean into those kinds of questions for this coming week! Also remember that it is never our goal to have you all answer each question, but to build relationships with all present! Remember our mission for our groups?

-> meaningful relationships centered on God's word and prayer <-

1) [READ Deuteronomy 5:1](#). Moses gathered all of Israel to hear the words of the Lord. Although God cannot be seen, He can still be heard. The Israelites heard the voice of God through Moses. How do you hear Him today?

LEADERS NOTE: Hearing from the Lord is an incredible part of the Christian life – but is not always as easily understood. You'll likely hear immediate answers like, "through reading the bible," "through prayer," "attending church." Those are not wrong answers! However, invite your members to think beyond the usual answers, and into other ways.

DISCUSSION TIP: As your members share their responses – even when they are the 'usual' responses – be gracious for their offerings. The last thing we want to do is to suggest that how they hear the Lord isn't good enough, do your best to affirm those in your group! Consider asking,

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

- How else do we think that we can hear the voice of the Lord?
- How have we heard others share about how they have heard God speak?

- [READ John 14:23-26](#). Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will be our primary aid in hearing God's voice. How does He do that?

LEADERS NOTE: Jesus is speaking here in the gospel of John, telling us that as we receive the love of God, we are called to action to "keep His word." To follow His commands – to follow the Law. Love and obedience are tied together – you cannot have one without the other. Jesus, and the Father, however knows how impossible it is for us to respond with full obedience. Therefore, we are given the Holy Spirit – "the Helper" – the One who will assist us in remembering what we have read, learned, and been taught. I sometimes like to think that the Spirit works like how our conscience works, that inner voice that we hear in our mind about what is right, and what is wrong. While our conscience is still fallible, the Spirit, however is not. Consider the following additional question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- How do we tell the difference between what is our own thoughts and what the Spirit is prompting us with?

2) [READ Deuteronomy 5:6](#) (see also [Leviticus 11:45](#) & [Exodus 20:1-2](#)). Why does the Lord remind the Israelites about their deliverance/salvation ahead of listing the 10 Commandments? How do these commandments shape our response to God?

LEADER NOTE: It is important in these contexts to see that God delivered the Israelites from Egypt ahead of giving them the law. Grace and love came first. Then the law was given, so that the Israelites (and us today) would have a set of parameters that would guide our relationship with the Father! As in a game of soccer, hockey, or ping-pong, there are rules that provide a structure and format for the game to be played. It's the same in the Christian life, there is a structure and parameters that guide and govern the lives that we live, this structure comes from the Law that God originally gave. We also need to see that the Law is meant to enhance life, rather than restrict life; it is meant to show us how to live, as opposed to how not to live. Furthermore, as Paul writes in Galatians 2:16, that obeying and following the law does not simply justify us – Christ did that already through His death, we are made right and good by His shed blood. Our response of obedience follows because of our gratitude!

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- Consider invite your members to look up and reflect upon these verses which talk further about this theme:
 1. Romans 5:8
 2. Ephesians 2:4-5
 3. 1 John 4:19

- [READ Matthew 5:17-20](#). The early Jewish leaders thought that Jesus was ending the authority of the Law. What do you think Jesus is getting at?

LEADER NOTE: The Jewish leaders in Jesus' time – the Scribes and Pharisees – followed every letter of the law, in every way possible. They believed that salvation for them would come from strict adherence to the Law. Jesus however, sees it differently – as there is something else happening behind the Law. When you think about it – some of the commandments, in their easiest form, are simply to follow. Simply – don't murder anyone. Or, just don't steal. If you haven't done either of those things, pat yourself on the back!! Jesus didn't see it like that. Look through the following verses (5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44) as Jesus says, *"you have heard of old ... (insert OT commandment) ... But I say to you ... (insert Jesus' interpretation)."* Jesus does not end the particular laws, but deepens them! No longer are they simply about not murdering, lusting, retaliating, etc., but now they're about the motive behind the action! Jesus tells us that the Law is about the state of our hearts and intentions! The law is meant to guide our thinking – before we act!

DISCUSSION TIP: If your members are not seeing what Jesus is getting at by simply looking at 5:17-20 – invite them to look through the rest of chapter 5, looking for the *"But I say to you"* sayings. Then invite them to answer the following additional question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

- Throughout Matthew chapter five, how were the words of Jesus changing or altering the Law?

3. [REVIEW Deuteronomy 5:7-21, READ Matthew 22:37-39](#). Biblical law has two focal points, (1) our relationship with God, and (2) our relationships with each other. As fallen people, we identify and place great weight upon a third: our relationship with our possessions. We then play around with the order of these points. Why do we place our possessions over people, and God?

LEADER NOTE? The 10 Commandments have two pillars. (1) Commandments 1-4 consist of instructions on our relationship with God, & (2) commandments 5-10 consist of instruction that guides our relationships with each other. Jesus does the same as He summarizes the law in two statements in Matthew 22. The first commandment is about our relationship with God, and the second is about our relationship with others. In our fallen nature, people have added a third pillar, that guards our possessions, which really, breaks the first four of the 10 Commandments. At its core, the Law teaches us that we need to have a priority structure in our lives, that places God first, each other second, and everything else, third. Talk to anyone else – believers or not – and you will quickly see different orders. People will put their kids above their faith, their wealth and possessions above their faith.

DISCUSSION TIP: When looking at priorities, its important to see that it's not about the amount of time that each priority receives, but which one receives attention first or the most often.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

- In our lives that are pulled in so many different directions, how to manage to find the balance of all the priorities?
- As you've heard members of your group share about their priority setting routines, what can you learn from other's patterns and habits?

- When you discover disorder in your priorities, how do you re-establish proper order?

LEADER NOTE: This questions begs your members to be self-reflective of their own patterns of life. In order to bring this up in your group, ask the following additional question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

- As you answered this question, did you discover any disorder in your life?

TAKING IT HOME

READ [Leviticus 19:1-4](#), [1 Peter 1:15-19](#). The secret to holy living is not rooted in knowledge alone. While knowledge is vital, obedience is paramount. How do you approach life with God's command to pursue holy living, and being an imperfect human?

LEADER NOTE: In Deuteronomy 5:29, we hear the plea of the Lord for us to love Him, *"Oh that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!"* (NIV). As Pastor Justin said this weekend, the Lord simply wants us to love Him back! While we understand our fallen nature leaves us limited in our ability to fully love God back, the Lord desires that we put the effort in – to try – to respond to Him better than we did before, to always be on a path that is drawing us closer to him. We need to understand that we may never be perfect, but that we're always on that journey towards Him, being aware of, and repenting of our failings as we go.

REPHRASED QUESTION:

- While we are yet broken, fallen, forever distanced sinners – how do we wrestle with pursuing him while being anchored in sin?

CLOSE YOUR MEETING: Invite your members into a time of prayer, chatting through your on-going prayer needs, updating each other on where things are at! Be sure to in the midst of this, to offer prayers of gratitude & thanksgiving!

LEADER NOTE: Remember to consider some new strategies for prayer. If the "around the room" model hasn't worked well, consider "breakouts" (male/female or mixed groups of 3-4).

ADDITIONAL SELF STUDY *(Optional Personal Reflection Questions)*

LEADER NOTE: We went a different direction again this week – and are encourage you as a Life Group to look for ways to support and encourage each through our 30 Days of prayer – see next section below.

SUPPORTING EACH-OTHER THROUGH THIS INITIATIVE

Share with your Life Group how the Lord is challenging you in these 30-Days of prayer.

What have you learned about yourself and prayer during this initiative?

GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVE PROJECT: Have you planned your serve project yet? Head over to the [lifegroups/serve](#) page for all the ways in which you can serve with your group!

PICTURES: We are looking for pictures – from your meetings, upcoming serve projects, or socials! We want to put together a highlight video to be shown to our church after this Life Group semester wraps up. Please email them directly to pastor Adam – adam@gatewaycrc.org.

HASHTAG CHALLENGE: Be sure to encourage your group to use the #GatewayLifeGroups hashtag on Facebook and Instagram. Remember that there is going to be a \$300 gift card draw at the end of the semester. [One COVID tip – try to inspire the public sharing of photos that follow covid-19 protocols. Optics & perception play a role]

"THE MIRROR"

WHAT IS THE LAW?

1. Not ___arbitrary rules___, but a reflection of the ___nature of God and us___
2. Not ___independent list of rules___, but an ___interdependent mirror___
James 2:10, Matthew 5:28, Matthew 5:21

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH THE LAW?

- It ___condemns___ us
Romans 2, Romans 3:23

WHAT IS THE ONLY SOLUTION?

- ___perfect obedience___, or a ___perfect redeemer___
Revelations 5:2-4, 2 Corinthians 5:21

WHAT IS THE ONLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSE?

- ___grateful obedience___



ACTIVE LISTENING

Winter 2021 Semester | WEEK #6

In our Life Groups, and in one-on-one conversations with our Life Group members – we need to be effective listeners. There are few things more validating to people than when others take the time to truly listen to them. Today, we're going to look at the five steps to active listening. These are non-verbal ways we tell another person "I'm listening and I'm interested in what you are saying."

These steps spell out the acronym SOLER and are:

- Squarely face the person
- Open your posture
- Lean towards the other
- Eye contact maintained
- Relax while attending

Let's walk through these. Some of these are more specific to a one-on-one conversation, but they can all be applied to a group setting as well.

S: Sitting squarely says, "I'm here with you, I'm available to you." In contrast, turning your body away from another person while you talk to him or her can lessen your degree of contact with that person. If, for any reason, facing the person squarely is too threatening for them, then an angled position may be more helpful. Sitting at more of a 5 o'clock position also helps to avoid the possibility of staring at them.

O: Adopt an open posture. Crossing your arms or your legs can be a sign of lessened involvement with or availability to others. An open posture says you are open to them and what they have to say. It is non-defensive in nature.

L: It can be helpful to lean slightly in towards the other person. It says, "I'm with you, I'm interested in you and what you have to say." Leaning back can suggest the opposite. However, it's important not to lean too far forward or

you may be seen as placing a demand on them and they may find it intimidating.

E: Maintain good eye contact. It's another way of saying, "I'm interested, I'm with you." Remember this is not the same as staring. You will need to look away every so often, in order not to stare, but monitor the amount you look away. It could say something about your own level of comfort or discomfort.

R: Be relaxed or natural. If you are fidgeting nervously it will distract the other person. Being relaxed also tells them that you are comfortable with using your body as a vehicle of personal contact and expression. It helps put them at ease.

If you really want to recognize the importance of these, think through the opposite. Have you ever been leading a small group or in a meeting where someone is going on and on and you just want them to shut up? What do you do? You turn away, you avoid eye contact, you cross your arms –you do anything you can to hint to them that you are not interested. Right? We recognize the value of this when we want someone to stop talking. We need to also remember it and be intentional about it when we want someone to start or continue sharing. Some Things to Consider:

- Which of the active listening steps resonates most with you? How have you seen it at work in your own life?
- Which of the active listening steps seems most awkward to you? Why?
- If you were more intentional about active listening in your group, how would that impact it?
- If you were more intentional about active listening in one-on-one conversations, how would that impact them

Pastor Justin
& Pastor Adam

