

## **Series:**

## **Week and Title:**

### **(re)Connecting**

- Unless everyone in the Group was previously together (don't assume), ask each person to briefly introduce his/herself (name, family, occupation/homemaker, etc.) and one interesting, unusual, or unexpected thing about his/herself.
- What holiday traditions does your family have?
- Thanksgiving and Christmas are right around the corner. Ask the group what their plans are. Pay special attention to those who have no place to go or may be new to the area/church. The holidays are an opportunity for your Life Group to embrace those who may be lonely.

### **What We Believe**

- The Lord's prayer, (Matthew 6:9-15, Luke 11:2-4) is translated in the ESV as, "...and lead us not into temptation..." Yet, James 1:13 reads, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one." The Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 127 renders the text as, "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one." What's the difference between a temptation and a trial?
- Read Romans 5:1-11. In your own words, what is God telling us in this text?
- Verse 1 says the church is justified by faith. Verse 9 says the church is justified by the blood of Christ. What does it mean to be justified?
- Verse 4 reads, "...and endurance produces character, and character produces hope..." The word the ESV translates as "character" is a difficult word to translate into English. The word means, "the result of being tested and approved upon the basis of trial." How do trials and endurance produce hope?
- Why doesn't Christian hope put us to shame?
- Read the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 127. Who/what are our sworn enemies?
- Read the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 128. Why can we trust God to

answer our petitions?

- Read the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 129. What does this tell us about God's character?

## **How God's Word Speaks to Our Lives**

- When we face trials, what response does the Lord want to see from us? What response does the devil, the world, and our own flesh desire?
- When we succumb to temptation, can we blame our sworn enemies - the devil, the world, and our own flesh? Why or why not?
- If the Lord gives us trials and we succumb to temptation, is it God's fault we sinned? Why or why not?
- Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Have you ever faced temptation that was more than you can bear? Did the Lord provide a way of escape so that you might endure temptation? Give examples of how you've been tempted and how the Lord has provided a way of escape.
- What temptations do you struggle with regularly? What triggers the temptation?
- What strategies do you use to avoid temptation? How can your Life Group help you avoid temptation?

## **How God's Word Speaks to Our Family**

- Thanksgiving and Christmas are right around the corner. During the holidays we often mingle with friends and family we haven't seen in a long time. What trials are you likely to endure in the coming months as you interact with family? How will you take advantage of the trials that are coming your way?
- It's difficult to watch loved ones succumb to temptation. What strategies have you used to help your loved ones avoid temptation? What behaviors and actions can we take that will increase the likelihood that our loved ones will accept our help?
- How can your Life Group pray for your loved ones who are succumbing to temptation?

## **How God's Word Speaks to our Worship**

- What temptations might worship leaders and pastors face as they facilitate worship for the church? What measures are or should be in place to help worship leaders and pastors avoid temptation?
- Who/What is the focus of worship? What temptations draw us away from that focus?
- What does God do during worship that might help us endure times of trial?

## **Kingdom Building Opportunities**

- The news is full of headlines highlighting Christians behaving badly. Why does the world take special notice when Christians succumb to temptation? Is the world justified in taking special notice when Christians behave badly?
- What reasons have you heard (or maybe given yourself) for NOT sharing the gospel with your neighbor? Is the opportunity to share the gospel a trial? If so, how do we pass? If not, why not?
- What temptations might we face as we share the gospel with our neighbors? How can we mitigate against these temptations?

## Scripture References

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Ro 5:1–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

## Creeds and Confessions

### Q & A 127

Q. What does the sixth petition mean?

A. “And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one” means:  
By ourselves we are too weak  
to hold our own even for a moment.<sup>1</sup>  
And our sworn enemies—  
the devil,<sup>2</sup> the world,<sup>3</sup> and our own flesh—<sup>4</sup>  
never stop attacking us.  
And so, Lord,  
uphold us and make us strong  
with the strength of your Holy Spirit,  
so that we may not go down to defeat  
in this spiritual struggle,  
but may firmly resist our enemies  
until we finally win the complete victory.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8

<sup>3</sup> John 15:18-21

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

### Q & A 128

Q. What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?

A. For the kingdom  
and the power  
and the glory are yours forever” means:

We have made all these petitions of you  
because, as our all-powerful king,  
you are both willing and able  
to give us all that is good;<sup>1</sup>

and because your holy name,  
and not we ourselves,  
should receive all the praise, forever.<sup>2</sup>

1 Rom. 10:11-13; 2 Pet. 2:9  
2 Ps. 115:1; John 14:13

### **Q & A 129**

Q. What does that little word “Amen” express?

A. “Amen” means:  
This shall truly and surely be!  
It is even more sure  
that God listens to my prayer  
than that I really desire  
what I pray for.<sup>1</sup>

1 Isa. 65:24; 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:13

# Facilitator Cheat Sheet

**Justification.** The act of God in bringing sinners into a new covenant relationship with himself through the forgiveness of sins. Along with such terms as “regeneration” and “reconciliation,” it relates to a basic aspect of conversion. It is a declarative act of God by which he establishes persons as righteous; that is, in right and true relationship to himself.

Since the time of the Reformation, when Martin Luther reestablished the doctrine of justification by faith alone as the cornerstone for theological understanding, this term has had special significance in the history of theology. To Luther it represented a rediscovery of Paul and a fundamental counterthrust to medieval Catholicism with its theology of works and indulgences. The doctrine of justification by faith alone affirms the thoroughgoing sinfulness of all persons, their total inability to deal effectively with their own sin, and the gracious provision through the death of Jesus Christ of a complete atonement for sin, to which persons respond in simple trust without any special claims or merit of their own.

Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). Justification. In Baker encyclopedia of the Bible (Vol. 2, p. 1252). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

## A Note on Temptation vs Trial

13 πειρασμός, depending on the context, can be translated “temptation” or “testing.” Here the latter is to be preferred because God does not lead into temptation (cf. Jas 1:13); he does, however, allow his people to be tested. “To be tempted” is to be enticed to sin; “to be tested” is to be brought into difficult circumstances that try one’s faithfulness. The two are similar, since sin can result in either case; yet they are also to be differentiated, since the former has a negative purpose, the latter a positive one.

Hagner, D. A. (1993). Matthew 1–13 (Vol. 33A, p. 151). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

## **A Note on Hope and Shame**

*hope does not disappoint.* I.e., it does not put one to shame, an allusion to Pss 22:6 and 25:20 (“in you they trusted and they were not put to shame”). Paul stresses that the hope of God’s glory is not illusory; it is founded on God’s love of human beings. Hence the Christian will never be embarrassed by a disappointed hope; implicit is a comparison with mere human hope, which can deceive. See Isa 28:16; Heb 6:18–19.

Fitzmyer, J. A., S. J. (2008). Romans: a new translation with introduction and commentary (Vol. 33, pp. 397–398). New Haven; London: Yale University Press.