



Grow Group Guide | Week 1

Announcements

Text/Email Teaser

As Christians, we know we're supposed to start with love in everything we do. But what if it's just "not that easy?" We hear you. Let's talk about it this week at Grow Group!.

Fellowship (15-20 minutes)

Icebreaker:

Recently we've seen quite a few changes in our sanctuary and worship services. Ask the group what they think of these changes. Encourage conversation by bringing up specific changes, such as:

1. the offering collection
2. the new decision/invitation style (personal prayer time, no singing)
3. the scriptural benediction prayer (no closing song)
4. the new materials like the bulletin, connect card, and vision booklet
5. the stools and tables Pastor Ted is preaching from

Be prepared to take note of any meaningful feedback, whether critical or complimentary, and bring to Pastor Ted at the end of the week.

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Topic Introduction

Briefly introduce and walk through SHBC's Vision Frame Booklet. Explain that our Purpose, Strategy, Values, and Measures all center around one idea: "start with love." Starting with love isn't our idea; it comes directly from Jesus' command in John 13:34 - 35, but before digging into this passage, help your Group understand its context by reviewing the setting and events of chapter 13.

Passage Discussion (*Remember: your goal is good discussion, not to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.*)

Read: John 13:34 - 35

Have the group read the scripture a second time and really focus on what is being said.

Understand the Word (questions focused on the understanding of the scripture)

1. Understanding the context, imagine you walk into the room that Jesus and his disciples are in here. What do you see? What's the feeling in the room? What do you notice about this scene? (consider setting details, i.e. it's passover, they're in an upper room, etc)
2. Why had no one washed the disciple's feet?
3. As Jesus says this, what do you think the disciples are thinking? What might they be feeling towards each other? (Keep in mind several of them have been vying for greatness; also Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial)
4. The Old Testament includes multiple commands from God about loving other people (Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 10), yet Jesus calls his command "new." What makes his command new and different?
5. Who does Jesus mean when he says "one another?"
6. Why was it so important that Jesus gives his disciples this command now?
7. What is at stake when it comes to "loving one another?" What are the benefits? What are the risks?
8. _____

Apply the Word (questions focused on life-application of the scripture)

1. Recall a time in your life when you were betrayed by someone you loved...what was it like? What role, if any, did love play in the aftermath? How were you reconciled?
2. How is my love for others being challenged this week?
3. What makes it difficult to love all the people God wants us to love?
4. What are some practical ways we can "love one another?"
5. If you commit to one intentional "start with love" action you feel God calling you to this week, what will it be?
6. _____

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Suggested Setup

In this first week, use your creativity and discernment to lead prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity.

Encouraged Focus Points:

1. Pray that the Group members move on their "start with love" actions
2. Pray that the Group will always love one another
3. Pray that others might see Jesus through the Group loving one another



Grow Group Guide | Week 2

Text/Email Teaser:

We all have “roots.” What are you rooted in? Let’s talk about it this week at Grow Group!

Icebreaker

Ask members:

1. What was your family’s relationship to church growing up? What did “going to church” mean to you?
2. What made you take the step to join this Grow Group? What do you hope comes from it?

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Topic Introduction

For many people, the “church” is a building that services are held in, or simply a weekly event to “go” to. The Bible, however, is clear that the church is much more than this; it’s our identity, its the soil for us to dig our roots into and flourish. This past Sunday, Pastor Ted challenged us to stop “going” to church, and instead plant and root ourselves deeply in the church. Ask: “*Why do you think it’s so easy to think of church as not much more than a building or weekend activity?*”

Passage Discussion (*Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.*)

Read: Psalm 92:12-13, Jeremiah 17:7-8

Now let’s read it again and really pay attention to what it’s saying.

Understand the Word (3 - 4 questions focused on the understanding of the scripture)

1. Are the purposes of these two passages the same? What makes them similar? What makes them different?
2. What is the house of the Lord? (Consider 1 Cor. 3:5-9, 3:16, 1 Tim. 3:15, or other “God’s House” references)
3. What is the “heat” Jeremiah is talking about? What is the “drought”?
4. What are some of the defining characteristics of palm trees and cedars?
5. We know what it looks like for a tree to flourish, but what does it look like for us to flourish in God’s house?
6. _____

Apply the Word (3 - 4 questions focused on life-application of the scripture)

1. What is the difference between being a member of the church and being planted in the church?
2. What kinds of "heat" and "drought" are you experiencing right now?
 - a. Do you feel like your flourishing through this?
3. If not the church, what else might we be rooted in?
4. What are the benefits of being planted and deeply rooted in the church? How can being more deeply planted make church life better, richer, more fulfilling?
5. Do you have room/margin in your life to become more deeply rooted in your church? What may be holding you back?
6. As you study these passages, how do they change how you view your current role in the church?
7. What about this Grow Group might help you plant deeper "in the house of the Lord?"
8. **What is your Group's next step** in setting each other up to flourish and grow strong in the Lord's house?
9. _____

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Suggested Setup

Use wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. Don't shy away from splitting into smaller groups, separate men/women, or prayer partners. Encourage prayer focus points.

Encouraged Focus Points:

1. Praise God and thank him for letting us plant ourselves in his church.
2. Pray that the Group would become more deeply rooted in the church together.
3. Pray that the members of the Group would not fear the "heat" and the "drought", but flourish as God designed them to.

Next Sunday Pastor Ted will preach the second message in the "Stop Going to Church" series, entitled, "The Church is for ..." Who exactly is the church for? We'll explore Acts 15 and see just how welcoming we are to others coming to our church and to the Gospel.



Grow Group Guide | Week 3

Icebreaker

Who is the church for? Are churches for “church people?” What is a “church person?”

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Topic Introduction

This past Sunday, Pastor Ted noted that instead of being a place for the lost to be saved, many of today’s churches are primarily for “church people” (people who are accustomed to church traditions, vernacular, and perhaps even legalism). Such a culture has made it harder for the lost to come to Christ, something that Paul and the early church dealt with themselves. After walking through Acts 15:1-21, we were challenged: is our church making it easier for the lost to come to Christ, or more difficult?

(Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.)

Understand the Word (Questions focused on the understanding of the scripture)

Acts 15:1-5

1. How are the Pharisee believers trying to modify salvation?
2. What is the significance of referring to the Pharisees as “believers” in vs. 5? How did they go from crucifying Christ to placing their faith and trust in Him?
3. What might have been Paul’s and Barnabas’ argument against the Pharisees? What had they experienced with the Gentiles on their missionary journeys?
4. _____

Acts 15:6-12

1. What is the point of Peter’s message to the elders and apostles?
2. If we were to rephrase v.10 into more modern language, how might it read?
3. _____

Acts 15:13-14, 19-22, 30-31

1. Who is James and why is he important to the Jerusalem church and to this situation?
2. What does it mean to “make it difficult for Gentiles to turn to God”? (v. 19)
3. What’s the significance of the four actions spoken against in v. 20? Does James mean that these are essential for salvation like the Pharisees felt about circumcision? If no, then why does James suggest these behaviors for the Gentile believers?
4. How did the Gentile believers respond to the letter sent by James and why? (vs. 30-31)
5. _____

Apply the Word (3 - 4 questions focused on life-application of the scripture)

1. When are we guilty of being modern day Pharisees?
2. What things in today’s world and our lives might not be a sin, but may drive people from salvation?
3. Have we created any barriers in our lives or at our church that make it harder for people to come to Christ?
4. **How can we make it easier for people to come to Christ?**
5. _____

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Suggested Setup

Use wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. Don’t shy away from splitting into smaller groups, separate men/women, or prayer partners. Encourage prayer focus points.

Encouraged Focus Points:

1. Pray for the group’s growth.
2. Pray that the group would make it easier for the lost to be saved in Christ.
3. _____



Grow Group Guide | Week 4

Teaser Text/Email

Living as Christians in modern world culture is tricky; where do we draw boundary lines, and where do we build bridges? Let's talk about it this week at Grow Group.

Icebreakers (to be used **as needed** as casual conversation starters or transitions)

What does the world expect Christians to be like?

What are some reactions you've seen people have when they realize you're a Christian?

What common events, places, practices, or other elements of today's worldly culture challenge your Christian values and integrity?

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Topic Introduction

This past Sunday, Dr. David Buschman led us in a conversation addressing the ongoing dance that is being a church separated from the world while participating in the world. So much of of this discussion is defined by culture; the world's culture, our families' cultures, our church's culture... So, when living as Christians in modern world culture, where do we draw boundary lines, and when do we build bridges? Let's get into this.

(Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.)

Moving Towards Separation:

Read: 1 John 2:15

What does Paul mean by "loving the world?" What kinds of actions indicate we are devoted to the world rather than God?

Read: 2 Corinthians 6:17

What does it mean to be separated here? How does it differ from being isolated?

Read: 1 Peter 2:11

What does it look for someone to *literally* being living as a foreigner, or as an exile in a foreign land? What's the difference between the two? Can you tell the group about time you felt like a foreigner or an exile because of your faith?

Read: Ephesians 5:11-12; Philippians 4:8-9

Why is separation vital to our faith? What are the dangers of being too separated? How can we tell if we've reached that point? Do we need to draw certain lines?

Movement to Participation

Read: John 10:10, Matt 5:13-16, James 2:14-17, Matt 7:1

1. Why is it so important to build bridges to non-believers? When/how did Jesus build such bridges?
2. What can put our light “under a bowl,” or cause us to lose our “saltiness”?
3. When have you had the opportunity lately to build a bridge with a non-believer? Did it challenge your culture?
4. How can we make sure our “separation” does not lead to our judgement of non-believers?

Read: John 17:14-19

1. What does this passage say about our role in “the world”?

Wrap-Up

What can we do as a group *this week* to stay set-apart as believers but build bridges to show Christ’s love to our community?

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Suggested Setup

Lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. Don’t shy away from splitting into smaller groups, separate men/women, or prayer partners. Encourage prayer focus points.

Group Focus Points:

1. Pray that Group Members would be faithfully set-apart as God has commanded.
2. Pray that the Group members would have clear opportunities to build bridges with non-believers this week.
3. Pray that the Group would be able to show Christ’s love without judgement.

Church Focus Points

1. Pray for the outreach and giving ministries currently in full swing at SHBC (Vet Coat Drive, Operation Christmas Child, F.L.I.P.)



Grow Group Guide | Week 5

Icebreaker

Let's break the ice by talking about breaking the ice. What's your go-to method for starting conversation with strangers you may or may not have anything in common with?

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Topic Introduction

This past Sunday, we were encouraged to pursue a direction for the Church in which everyone is *known*, everyone is *needed*, and everyone is *growing*. This is a direct reflection of how the early church worked together in Acts 2: The church ate together, praised God together, had fun together. They were devoted to each other, gave to each other. They were an irreplaceable part of each other's lives. While it's been nearly 2,000 years since the days of the early church, the way they operated in Acts 2 is still the picture of how God wants His church to function in today's world.

Discussion (*Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions/activities. Choose the best, leave the rest.*)

Read Acts 2:42-47

1. What does it mean in v.44 to "hold all things in common?" What are some of the results, or effects, of having "all things in common" with other believers?
2. Consider today's church compared to the example established by the early church. What steps can we take to become more like the early church?
3. **Activity** (*requires handout/pens*): Give the group members a copy of the 59 "One Anothers" handout. Allow them the opportunity to read quietly through the list, asking them to make a note of the "one another" that moves them the most right now as they do (perhaps play some light music here). Have members share their selections and reasons.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

1. How does Paul's analogy here translate to our church? How does it apply to our group?
2. Our church's purpose is to "Love God, Love People, and Make Disciples." What can we do as a group to *help each other* use our individual gifts to help the body fulfill its purpose?
3. Read Malachi 3:10. How does the tithe relate to the analogy of the body and the church?
4. **Activity** (*requires pens/index cards*): Have each group member write down their name on the top of an index card or piece of paper (or write them out yourself in advance). Have everyone pass their card to someone else. Say: "On the card you are holding, write down one special gift or ability that this person brings to this body of believers." Repeat process 3 or 4 times and return cards to the original group members.

Read Ephesians 5:25, 28-30

1. How much did Christ love the church? How should we love the church?
2. Are you giving yourself up for your church? If the church disappeared from your life, what kind of hole would it leave?

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Prompts:

1. Pray that our group and our church would seek to love and serve each other the way the early church did.
2. Pray that God would add to our number those who are being saved.
3. Pray that God would remove barriers preventing the parts of the body from working in harmony.

Action

Make sure your group members take an action step to apply the bible discussion to their lives. Here are some ideas this week:

- Find a place to serve within your church and actually follow through this week to get plugged in.
- If you are not already doing so, commit to begin tithing to your church this week.
- Spend time in prayer for your church. Pray for its leaders, staff, members and for its continued strength.

59 "One Anothers" of the New Testament

1. "...Be at peace with each other." (Mark 9:50)
2. "...Wash one another's feet." (John 13:14)
3. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34)
4. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34)
5. "...Love one another..." (John 13:35)
6. "...Love one another..." (John 15:12)
7. "...Love one another" (John 15:17)
8. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love..." (Romans 12:10)
9. "...Honor one another above yourselves." (Romans 12:10)
10. "Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16)
11. "...Love one another..." (Romans 13:8)
12. "...Stop passing judgment on one another." (Romans 14:13)
13. "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7)
14. "...Instruct one another." (Romans 15:14)
15. "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Romans 16:16)
16. "...When you come together to eat, wait for each other." (I Cor. 11:33)
17. "...Have equal concern for each other." (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. "...Greet one another with a holy kiss." (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. "Greet one another with a holy kiss." (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. "...Serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)
21. "If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other." (Galatians 5:15)
22. "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." (Galatians 5:26)
23. "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2)
24. "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)
25. "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32)
26. "...Forgiving each other..." (Ephesians 4:32)
27. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Ephesians 5:19)
28. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21)
29. "...In humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)
30. "Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:9)
31. "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13)
32. "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another." (Colossians 3:13)
33. "Teach...[one another]" (Colossians 3:16)
34. "...Admonish one another" (Colossians 3:16)
35. "...Make your love increase and overflow for each other." (I Thessalonians 3:12)
36. "...Love each other." (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. "...Encourage each other..." (I Thessalonians 4:18)
38. "...Encourage each other..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. "...Build each other up..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. "Encourage one another daily..." (Hebrews 3:13)
41. "...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)
42. "...Encourage one another." (Hebrews 10:25)
43. "...Do not slander one another." (James 4:11)
44. "Don't grumble against each other..." (James 5:9)
45. "Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16)
46. "...Pray for each other." (James 5:16)
47. "...Love one another deeply, from the heart." (I Peter 3:8)
48. "...Live in harmony with one another..." (I Peter 3:8)
49. "...Love each other deeply..." (I Peter 4:8)
50. "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." (I Peter 4:9)
51. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (I Peter 4:10)
52. "...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." (I Peter 5:5)
53. "Greet one another with a kiss of love." (I Peter 5:14)
54. "...Love one another." (I John 3:11)
55. "...Love one another." (I John 3:23)
56. "...Love one another." (I John 4:7)
57. "...Love one another." (I John 4:11)
58. "...Love one another." (I John 4:12)
59. "...Love one another." (II John 5)



Grow Group Guide | Week 6

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This past Sunday, Pastor Ted preached on miracles of healing. We see throughout the New Testament moments where people are miraculously healed, and then moments where people are left to their sicknesses. This week we're going to talk about times we might have experienced miracles of healing in the past, but perhaps more importantly, how we can remain true to our faith when God doesn't heal us the way we want him to.

(Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.)

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

1. Based on the phrasing of verse 7, what (or who) might the "thorn in Paul's flesh be? (What does "messenger of Satan" mean here?)
2. According to Paul, why didn't God take away the "thorn in [his] flesh?"
3. What is the significance of Paul pleading "three times" for the Lord's intervention here? (see Matt. 26: 39-44)
4. What are some lies we might believe about why God doesn't or hasn't healed us or someone we love?
5. _____

Read: John 14:12

1. What do you make of this? What does Jesus mean when he says "anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing?"
2. What is your faith's role in the miracles God does or does not allow in our lives?
3. Has your faith ever been based on the presence or absence of God's miracles, rather than who God is?
4. _____

Read: Matthew 26:47-54

1. Jesus performs a miracle of healing for a man trying to arrest him, and then declines one to save himself. What does this tell us about the nature of Jesus' miracles?
2. Why might God not heal us, or intercede for us, the way we want him to?
3. _____

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Consider breaking down into smaller prayer groups this week, such as men and women or prayer partners. Encourage group members to share and pray for:

1. The condition of their faith, especially when miracles don't happen.
2. A miracle that they are asking God for this week.
- 3.



Grow Group Guide | Week 6

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Despite its common misuse, the word “miracle” refers to when God supernaturally intervenes in our lives. This week we focus on miracles of demonic deliverance. In order for us to recognize when God is working these miracles in us, it is critical for us to be aware of and watchful for how the devil is trying to intervene (or invade) our lives.

Passage Discussion (*Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.*)

Read: Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 5:8

1. Refer to Eph 6:12: who is this verse referring to? Why is Paul referring to them in this way?
2. Explore the comparison of the devil to “a roaring lion prowling around looking for someone to devour.”
3. What ways have you seen demons disguise themselves? (*Try to dig deep into this one.*)
4. Read John 10:10. What is the devil’s (the thief’s) objective? What areas of our lives does he want to destroy? How has he tried to destroy your life?
5. Can we overemphasize demonic influence around us? Can we underemphasize their influence? What are the dangers of either?
6. _____

Read Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8-9, opt. James 4:7

1. How has God prepared us to resist the devil? (What has he given us? Who has he given us?)
2. Consider all the ways we’ve said Satan disguises himself or ways he has tried to destroy us...are you using what God has given you to resist him?
3. How does 1 Peter 5:9 relate to our group?
4. How can we better be “self-controlled and alert?”
5. _____

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

1. Thank the Lord for the authority and strength in Jesus through which we can resist the devil
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any places in your life where Satan might be lurking, and that he would be removed from that place.



Grow Group Guide | Week 7

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This past Sunday, Pastor Ted preached on miracles of healing. We see throughout the New Testament moments where people are miraculously healed, and then moments where people are left to their sicknesses. This week we're going to talk about times we might have experienced miracles of healing in the past, but perhaps more importantly, how we can remain true to our faith when God doesn't heal us the way we want him to.

(Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.)

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

1. Based on the phrasing of verse 7, what (or who) might the "thorn in Paul's flesh be? (What does "messenger of Satan" mean here?)
2. According to Paul, why didn't God take away the "thorn in [his] flesh?"
3. What is the significance of Paul pleading "three times" for the Lord's intervention here? (see Matt. 26: 39-44)
4. What are some lies we might believe about why God doesn't or hasn't healed us or someone we love?

5. _____

Read: John 14:12

1. What do you make of this? What does Jesus mean when he says "anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing?"
2. What is your faith's role in the miracles God does or does not allow in our lives?
3. Has your faith ever been based on the presence or absence of God's miracles, rather than who God is?

4. _____

Read: Matthew 26:47-54

1. Jesus performs a miracle of healing for a man trying to arrest him, and then declines one to save himself. What does this tell us about the nature of Jesus' miracles?
2. Why might God not heal us, or intercede for us, the way we want him to?

3. _____

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Consider breaking down into smaller prayer groups this week, such as men and women or prayer partners. Encourage group members to share and pray for:

1. The condition of their faith, especially when miracles don't happen. That their faith would be based in who God IS and not what he DOES.
2. A miracle that they are asking God for this week (healing, removal of a "thorn," demonic influence, etc.).
3. _____



Grow Group Guide | Week 9

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

In every story of need in the Bible, there is a miracle of provision; God always provided for those who followed Him. No truer is the case for Abraham when God called him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham's obedience to God, as well as God's response to Abraham's obedience, can help us change our perspective on how we should handle our faith and tests of our own.

(Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.)

👉 What kind of financial situation did you grow up in: often tight, usually enough, or always plenty?

👉 If just one material thing could make your life easier or better, what would it be?

👉 List some of your needs and some of your wants. What is the main difference between the two?

Read: Genesis 22:1-14

1. Review Gen. 12:1-3. What promises did God make to Abraham? Why is this important to the story we just read?
2. Why would Abraham even consider sacrificing Isaac? What belief empowered Abraham to obey such a difficult command?
3. Why do you think God doesn't give us everything we want or everything He promises immediately?
4. Why does God test His people?
5. Fill in the blank: I am desperately waiting for _____. Have you ever treated God as a "means to an end" to get what you put in the blank?
6. Is God's call to Abraham to sacrifice his son relatable to us? How?
7. Can you think of a time when God miraculously provided for you at a time when life seemed bleak?
8. _____

Read: Genesis 22:15-19

1. Think of a time when God brought a "test" into your life. What was that test? How did you respond to it? Did you see any positive benefits come as a result of the test?
2. What was God's response to Abraham's trusting obedience?

3. Obedience is built on trust in God. Many times sin flows from doubt about some quality in God (e.g. His goodness, power, love, wisdom, etc.) Think of a sin-struggle in your life. When you've given into that sin, what doubts about God motivated your choice?
4. This seems as good a time as any to talk about tithing. The Bible consistently refers to tithing as one of the best ways to be obedient to God and to show God we love Him. How might regularly giving back to God 10% of your income put you in a position to be blessed by God?
5. What do you learn about God in this chapter?
6. _____

Other references: Phil. 4:19; Isaiah 58:11; 2 Corinthians 9:10, Galatians 3:29

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Consider breaking down into smaller prayer groups this week, such as men and women or prayer partners. Encourage group members to share and pray for:

1. Is there something you know God wants you to do that you have hesitated, or not even tried at all? Spend time praying for faith and strength to obey God in this area this week.
2. Pray for miracles of provision in your own life. What situations in your life are you desperately waiting for God to remedy?
3. _____



Grow Group Guide | Week 10

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

Topic Introduction

This past Sunday we celebrated the hanging of the greens, and the many traditional decorations of the season while singing our favorite Christmas carols. These songs often use the imagery of the baby Jesus in the manger, and His meek and mild nature, but it is easy to miss the fact that it is all about Christ and how He is Lord over us. As we enter this Christmas season, Pastor Ted challenged us to consider just how much we have surrendered our lives to Jesus. Are we simply calling Jesus “Lord” and leaving it at that, or are we fully surrendering ourselves to Him and His will for us and our lives?

Passage Discussion (*Remember: your goal is good discussion, not just to get through all the questions. Choose the best, leave the rest.*)

Read: Luke 2:8-16

Now let's read it again and really pay attention to what it's saying.

1. Set the stage: what images come to mind when you read these verses?
2. Why did God choose shepherds for the angels to appear to?
3. The shepherd's response to God's glory was utter terror. Why does this matter?
4. What was the good news the angel brought? What made it so good?
5. **V. 15-16** tell us the shepherds ran to find Jesus. What does this tell us about their faith and hope? What if the shepherds saw the angel, but didn't go look for Jesus after?
6. **Read Luke 6:46.** Hopefully we all call Jesus our Lord, but what might indicate that may not be true?
7. What analogy does Jesus give in **verses 47-49**? Explore this analogy with your group.
8. Read **Romans 14:7-8**. How does this help define what our relationship with Christ should be?
9. Who is Jesus in your life today? ... On an index card, fill in the blank: “Jesus is my _____, my _____, my _____” ... Encourage people to be personal, and non-cliche.

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. Don't be afraid to try splitting into smaller groups, separate men/women, or prayer partners.

1. Are we currently being obedient and calling Jesus our Lord, or are we doing anything that contradicts this command? Are we still relying on our own understanding and trying to set our own paths straight?
2. Pray for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and for today's missionaries. Encourage your group members to faithfully give.