



Grow Group Guide | Week 1

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

In this week's Bible discussion, we will follow up Pastor Ted's "New You" sermon by digging deeper into the material and scriptures it was inspired by. It is strongly recommended that you as the leader read Chapters 9 and 10 (p.83-98) of Nelson Searcy's "The New You," which is available to you for free at the Welcome Desk if you do not already have a copy.

The questions below are directly from "The New You" study guide material, and we've added key passages for many of the questions to aid in your preparation and discussions. We encourage you to dig deeper and include other scriptures you know or find as you begin to shape your discussion.

As always, not all questions are perfectly tailored for your group. Use this guide as best serves your group's discussion. Choose the best, leave the rest.

Part 3: Small Steps to Better Spiritual Health

Chapter 9: Living the Fully Engaged Life

1. Describe a time when you started the journey toward getting physically healthy, but ended up repeating old, bad habits.
2. How would you describe your spiritual life right now? Would you say you are fully committed to Him?
3. Do you believe that God is fully engaged with you? How does that thought change how you approach life? **Read Psalm 139:5-10**
4. In your own words, describe how Jesus demonstrates God's full engagement in our lives. **Read John 3:16**
5. What can you do today to increase your level of engagement with God? **Read Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:21-22, Ephesians 4:24**
6. Are there areas of your life where you are living your way, instead of living God's way? For encouragement, **Read Psalm 139:13, 1 Corinthians 6:13, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 3:20**

Chapter 10: Getting Connected

1. What are some negative experiences associated with going to church that sometimes keep people away from church?
2. Explain some ways that church can be a source of hope, healing, and community in people's lives.
3. Why is it important for you to be a member of a local church, and not just an occasional attender of a church? **Read 1 Corinthians 12:18-21, 27**

4. Do you have close Christian friends you can share your joys and struggles with? **Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**
5. What gifts and talents has God given you that could be a blessing to others?
6. Do you feel like you are connected to something bigger than yourself, to what God is doing in the world? Why or why not?

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.

**SEE THE ATTACHED ADDENDUM AS A TOOL FOR YOU TO
USE AS IT SERVES YOUR GROUP BEST.**

1. So here's the first pillar of a healthy spiritual life. **"My faith is involved in every aspect of my life."** 0 to 10. Is that true about you? Does what we do on Sunday have a great significance on how you live your life Monday through Saturday? Does your faith impact how you are at work, how you are at home?

Or is God just one segment of your life, but your social life, your career, those are separate? Grade yourself on this one 0 to 10.

2. **"Because of my faith, I have meaning and purpose in my life."** Here's the point, do you feel like your faith gives your life purpose? More than just your job or your relationships bringing purpose, your faith is what gives you real significance and meaning in life OR are you searching for more in life? I want you to grade 0 to 10, how would you grade yourself there?

3. **"My faith gives me inner peace."** Now, what's the opposite of this? Constant worry, fear about the future. Instead of living the life God intended, you're in a state of constant worry and hurry. Does your faith give you peace even when life isn't perfect? How do you feel about that? 0 to 10.

4. **"I am a person who is spiritually committed."** Now you get some points by being here today on the first Sunday of the year, but when people look at you and look at your life, do they say that you're spiritually committed? Are you committed to God, committed to your church, to your grow group, to spending time with God every day? Are you spiritually committed?

5. **"I spend time in worship every day."** Worship is more than just music. It's praying and it's reading your Bible. It's thinking about and communicating with God during your day. Do you take time to focus your attention on God throughout the day every day

6. **"Because of my faith, I forgive people who have hurt me deeply."** 0 to 10 on that. This is a challenging one because we all have people in our lives who've hurt us in big ways and in small ways. Have you forgiven them or are you still holding on to any grudges?

7. **"My faith has called me to develop my given gifts and talents."** Because of my faith I'm developing my gifts and talents. Because here's the truth, God has created you with a lot of ability. Are you using your gifts to honor God? Have you found a place in the church to use those gifts? 0 to 10 on that.

8. **"I take unpopular stands to defend my faith."** In other words, are you willing to do what is right even if no one else is? Are you willing to stand up for your faith? Now if you do this, we live in a state where that may make you very unpopular. If you don't think so, then just take your Bible to work tomorrow and see what happens. The question here is are you standing up for Jesus?

9. **"I speak words of kindness to those in need of encouragement."** I speak words of kindness. Are your words encouraging at church, work, at home, at school? Are you using your words as tools to build people up instead of as weapons to tear them down?

10. **"I talk about my faith with those who are not yet Christians."** Do you pray for the people in your life, family member, friends, coworkers who are not Christians? Do you let them know that you're a follower of Jesus? Do you invite them to come to church? Do you talk about your faith?

These questions are designed to help you identify what areas you need to work on this year, because here's the point: **We have to take responsibility for our spiritual life.**

I hear all the time, "Pastor, I'm not growing. It's my work schedule. It's my parents. It's the church. It's your boring messages. That's why I'm not growing. I'm just not growing." It's easy to blame someone or something else. Look, I want this year to be different. I want you to take responsibility. I want you to own your faith. You look at your score and you say, "You know what, I'm at a 55 right now, but I'm not going stay there. I'm going to work at this. I'm going be an 85 by the end of the year."



Grow Group Guide | Week 2

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

What a wonderful service we had this past Sunday as we ordained Rey Green into the deacon ministry. It is a very meaningful time when the church has the opportunity to set aside one of their own for being a deacon, for mission work or full-time church ministry.

God's Word sets the standards pretty high for these and other church leaders who experience a calling to lead God's people, whether we use terms like deacons, elders, pastors, shepherds or bishops. But are these standards "fair?" Is it possible for any person to live up to such high standards? Wouldn't living like this take all the fun out of life?

This week we pause from "The New You" series and focus on "The High Standard of God." Take your group through just a few Scriptures and enjoy a good discussion of some of these standards. Be careful though. Some items like "the husband of but one wife" can be a bit controversial, so tread lightly and allow for differing opinions should they arise.

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Opening questions to break the ice ...

1. When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?
2. Is that what you became? Was your goal achievable or just a pipe dream, so-to-speak?

Read 1 Timothy 1:3-7

1. Paul instructs Timothy to remain at the church in Ephesus and root out certain bad behaviors that some church leaders were guilty of. What were those behaviors in vs. 3, 4, 6, and 7? How might they be damaging to the body of believers?
2. In vs. 5, Paul shares 3 qualities of the kind of leaders to look for? What are they? If Timothy found such leaders, how might they take care of the issues the church was facing as discussed above?

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13

1. Given the struggle with the false teachers and such in 1:3-7, why is Timothy provided this list of qualifications for leaders?
2. We're going to spend the rest of our time discussing and describing each characteristic listed for overseers of all kinds. But should these also not describe Christians in general as well?
 - a. Above reproach v. 2
 - b. Husband of but one wife (What does this mean?)

- c. Temperate
 - d. Self-controlled
 - e. Respectable
 - f. Hospitable
 - g. Able to teach
 - h. Not given to drunkenness v. 3
 - i. Not violent but gentle
 - j. Not quarrelsome
 - k. Not a lover of money
 - l. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect v. 4
 - m. Not a recent convert ... What reason does Paul give for this? v. 6
 - n. Good reputation with outsiders ... Why is this necessary? v. 7
 - o. Deacons: worthy of respect v. 8
 - p. Sincere
 - q. Not indulging in much wine
 - r. Not pursuing dishonest gain
 - s. Hold to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience v. 9
 - t. They must first be tested v. 10
3. How are the ideal wives of overseers and deacons described in v. 11? How important is it that leaders have these types of spouses? What could be the downfall if they are less than what Paul suggests?
 4. How might we hold one another accountable to these godly high standards without being critical or judgemental of one another?

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 3

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This past Sunday, Pastor Ted continued his series on “The New You,” a focus on our spiritual, physical, emotional and financial health as we embark on the new year. This week we focus on the physical elements of our spiritual well-being, and the direct correlation between how we treat our bodies and how we honor God. *As always, not all questions are perfectly tailored for your group. Use this guide as best serves your group’s discussion. Choose the best, leave the rest.*

Read Psalm 139:13-14

What does this passage make you feel about yourself? How does it make you regard your body?

Read Colossians 1:16

Are our bodies our own? What does it mean to have been created by God for God?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What does it mean to have been bought by God with a high price? Besides physical disadvantages, what is the significance of mistreating or neglecting your body (in regards to honoring God)?

Read Matthew 26:41

How could this verse apply to bad habits and temptations, such as physical temptations? Why are we called to pray?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18

What is it about sexual sin that so *clearly* affects the body more than any other sin? Why is sexual sin such a threat to your own body?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:27

What does it mean to be physically disciplined? What does physical discipline look like in action? How does this affect us emotionally? Spiritually? What physical goals have you set for 2020? Could your Grow Group help hold you accountable?

Read Romans 6:12-13

What is required for our entire body to be an instrument glorifying to God? What keeps our body from being such an instrument? When we neglect our body, what might we be missing out on spiritually?

Read Romans 12:1-2

Thinking back to the Old Testament, what kind of sacrifices (in terms of quality) were offered to God? If we are called to be living sacrifices, how then can we honor God with our bodies? How can we, as living sacrifices, be a testament to others of God and His will for our lives?

Read Matthew 10:39

Do you find this passage to be encouraging or discouraging? Empowering, or scary? How come?

Prayer (15-20 Minutes) Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 4

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This week, we will dig deeper into our emotional health as we consider the importance of a joyful heart, the ugliness of anxiety, and the necessity of church community.

As always, not all questions are perfectly tailored for your group. Use this guide as best serves your group's discussion. Choose the best, leave the rest.

Read Proverbs 17:22

- What makes a joyful heart good medicine?
- What qualifies as a crushed spirit?

Read Philippians 4:6-9

- What does it mean to be anxious? What is anxiety as you know it? Are there any benefits to anxiety?
- Paul tells us to not be anxious about anything. Are there exceptions?
- What does Paul say is the remedy to anxiety? Is this practical?
- What is to gain in making our requests to God through prayer? Doesn't He already know what we want? Why should we still let Him know our requests?
- How might we know if our hearts and minds are guarded through Christ Jesus?
- Take a look at verse 8. Which of these things we are called to meditate on stand out to you? Why?
 - What does it mean to meditate, in this context?
 - Are these things easy to meditate on?
 - What do these things have in common? What are these things clearly *not*?
- How will the habits described in these verses protect us and improve our emotional health?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- According to this verse, what is the importance of community?
- Why do we need other people to help us through life--both celebrating in times of joy and encouraging in times of difficulty?
- Why can it be tempting to isolate ourselves--not come to church, avoid friends--when things aren't going well?
- Where, specifically, can we find the support these verses say we need?
- Is our Grow Group a place where we can be prayed for, supported, encouraged, and given godly counsel?

Other verses from this Sunday: Psalm 139:1; Psalm 119:25, 28; Psalm 139:23; Psalm 147:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Prayer (15-20 Minutes) Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 5

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This week we follow-up the last message in Pastor Ted's series "The New You" with a special focus on giving. Are we giving the right way, with the right attitude, and for the right reasons? How might we glorify God more with our finances this year? *As always, not all questions are perfectly tailored for your group. Use this guide as best serves your group's discussion. Choose the best, leave the rest.*

Read 2 Corinthians 8:7 (set up the context for your group)

- Are we excelling in these areas?
- Why did Paul single out "giving"? Is it harder to excel in giving, compared to the other attributes he mentioned? Why or why not? Or might we think that giving is of lesser spiritual value than the other mentioned attributes?

Read Malachi 3:8-10

- What is the difference between "tithes" and "offerings"? Why are we instructed to give both?
- Are we being obedient to God's commands if we only partially tithe?
- What is significant about God challenging us to test Him with our tithes and offerings? Can you share a time when you tested God in your giving?
- How can this passage be misinterpreted, or abused? What does "prosperity gospel" teach, and what makes it false teaching? What does it get wrong about this scripture?
- Does God want us to be rich, or does He want something else for us? Why does God bless us—bless those who are faithful in following and being obedient to His commands?
- What "baby" or "big" steps can we take this week to be successful at tithing and giving offerings?

Read Mark 12:41-44

- Did the widow's sacrifice reveal something about her heart? If so, what?
- Are Christians called to give away all of their possessions?
- What should be learned from the widow's offering? What about her actions does Jesus want us to exemplify?
- How can we use these verses, or others from this week's sermon, to teach children or young adults (particularly if they don't have jobs yet) about giving?

Summing up "New You" series

- What area(s) of your life has God been speaking to you about? As we've gone through this series, what has God convicted you to change? Where is God leading you today?
- What in your life needs to be "burned"? What do you need to part with or destroy and not look back on?

Other verses from this Sunday: 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Matthew 6:21; Proverbs 3:9-10; Matthew 23:23; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Acts 20:35

Prayer (15-20 Minutes) Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 6

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This past week PT preached on the feeding of the five thousand. In Grow Groups this week we'll first review the miracle itself, and then we'll look to the next day as Jesus describes the spiritual meaning behind the miracle. Please examine the accompanying Bible study on John 6:22-70 as Jesus self-defines Himself as the Bread of Life, and how the Jews responded to His claim.

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Review Mark 6:30-44 and/or John 6:4-13 (don't dwell here long)

- What stood out to you from this passage or from the sermon on Sunday?

Read John 6:22-40 | Seeking

- The people ask Jesus in wonder, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Why were they surprised? See vs. 16-22.
- What is unique about Jesus's answer to the crowd's question in v. 25? Why didn't He directly answer their direct question?
- How does the crowd miss Jesus's point in vs. 26-27? Is Jesus saying we need to "work" for our salvation? What "work" does God require of us? See vs. 29.
- The crowd desired food for the body, but what kind of "food" was Jesus saying He brought? What needs will this "food" meet?
 - How are we like the crowd, looking to God for temporary satisfaction rather than true fulfillment?
- How can we as believers in Christ have confidence in the promises Jesus speaks in vs. 35-40?

Read John 6:41-51 | Grumbling

- What did Jesus say that made the people grumble in v. 41? Why did this get under their skin?
- What is the crowd's biggest gripe or complaint with Jesus? Why does this matter?
- In what ways is Jesus similar to the manna He speaks of here? In what ways is He different?

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Read John 6:52-59 | Quarreling

- What mistake do the people make when they hear Jesus talk about the eating of His flesh?
- Jesus doubles down when He reiterates that the bread is His flesh, and we are to eat it. Why does He do this, rather than directly clarifying what He meant?
- Jesus is not referring to the Lord's Supper in these verses. What does Jesus actually have in mind? How would we explain these verses to someone reading them for the first time?

Read John 6:60-71 | Abandoning

- What do the disciples mean by "hard saying" or "hard teaching"? What makes it so hard for them? Is it hard for you?
- The disciples were not only confused by Jesus' teachings; they were offended. What were they offended by?
- In v.66 many of the "disciples" abandoned Jesus. If you had asked one of them why they turned away, what might their answer be?
- In vs. 67 Jesus asks the twelve if they would now abandon Him as well. See Peter's response in the next two verses. Is Peter correct? Take a moment and verbalize your own confession of who you think Jesus is.

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 7

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

This week as we continue in Mark 6 we will be reading about and discussing the storm Jesus's disciples find themselves in after they departed from the feeding of the five thousand. We will also be challenged to share and discuss (and pray for one another about!) storms we may have or may be experiencing, and how Christ provides the ultimate stability amidst these moments of correcting and perfecting.

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Read Mark 6:45-52

- What is significant about Jesus going to the mountain to pray (v. 46)? Why did He seek to pray right then? Why did He often seek to pray without His disciples?
- By the way, before we go further, do you notice something or someone, rather, is missing from Mark's telling of the story? That's right, Peter! Why do you think Mark leaves him out, or more accurately, why Peter tells Mark to leave him out? Hurt pride, or humility?
- Why might Mark have recorded that Jesus almost walked by the disciples (v. 48)?
 - Perhaps to show them that life lived in faith is so much easier as He just walks on past them.
 - Or could Jesus have wanted them to cry out for help instead of Jesus just bailing them out of their problem. Does God want us to cry out to Him when we are in trouble? If God knows what we're going through, why does He want us to ask for help?
- What is significant about what Jesus said to the disciples (v. 50)? How does this statement resonate with you?
- Why in vs. 51-52 does Mark indicate that the disciples were amazed because "they had not understood about the loaves, and their hearts were hardened"? Why would this have caused amazement?
 - Are we, like the disciples, also prone to forget God's provision in our lives?
- Taking a step back ... Why would Jesus intentionally send His disciples into a storm?
- Are you in a storm? Or have you recently been through one or have one that comes to mind?
 - How was/is God working in the midst of this storm? Is He surprised by our storms?
 - How would you classify your storm? Would you describe it as a "correcting" storm, or a "perfecting" storm? Why?
 - What did you learn (or have you been learning) in the midst of your storm(s)?
 - What passages of scripture have stood out to you during your storms?
 - **Take some time to share, and allow time for members of your group to share.**

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- How did the disciples achieve stability in their storm (v. 51)?
 - How can we achieve stability in the midst of our storms?
- How have storms you've experienced been a growth opportunity? Have they allowed for more growth than when life was smooth sailing?
- How would you speak into the life of (or come alongside) a fellow believer who may be experiencing a raging storm?

Other verses from this week: John 6:16-21; Proverbs 27:1; Matthew 14:27; Psalm 107:23-31; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Isaiah 30:18; John 11:14-15; Habakkuk 2:3; 2 Peter 3:4

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 8

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

As we start in to Mark 7 we open in a scene where the Pharisees and scribes, again, were watching and waiting for a slip-up. And sure enough, they found reason to find fault. Jesus turned the tables on them to teach an important lesson on the error in putting things of man before the things of God. What is Jesus teaching us here? What can we take to heart from this “matter of the heart”? Remember that unless you provide copies of the Guide to your Group members, you should always repeat each question, and even a third time if necessary. As always, not all questions are perfectly tailored for your group. Use this guide as best serves your group’s discussion. Choose the best, leave the rest.

Read Mark 7:1-23

- What stands out to you--catches your attention--in the opening scene of these verses?
- What was the tradition Jesus’s disciples “violated”? Where did the tradition come from? (See Note #1.)
- Why did rules and traditions like the one the disciples violated exist? Was this particular tradition/rule bad? (See Note #2)
- Did Jesus break the tradition? If so or if not, how?
- What’s important about the continual reiteration of the phrase “tradition of the elders” or “tradition of men” (NKJV: vs. 3, 5, 8)? What point was Jesus making?
- Can man-made traditions/rules coexist with God’s Truth? What does Jesus have to say about them in verses 6-13?
- In vs. 9-12 Jesus gives a specific and relevant example to the Pharisees and scribes. What specific and relevant examples can we come up with of traditions we have elevated in church--whether spoken or unspoken? Or traditions you have seen in past churches you have been involved in?
 - Why were these traditions--rules--created?
 - Why is it tempting to create rules and traditions, and to follow them?
 - How have these man-made requirements undermined God's Truth?
- Pastor Ted said this past Sunday, “*Salvation isn’t a matter of the head; you can’t think your way into heaven. Salvation isn’t a matter of your hands; you can’t work your way into heaven. It’s a matter of the heart.*” Why can’t we be saved by following rules, regulations, or traditions?
- In verses 8-9, was Jesus condemning all tradition? If not, what kind of tradition does He condemn?
- How would you explain v. 15 to a teenager hearing this verse for the first time?
 - Does exposure to the evil of the world defile us and lead us to sin, or does it just add to our already existing predisposition to sin?
- Why do the disciples continue to not understand Jesus’s teaching (vs. 17-18)? What can we learn from *how* Jesus responds to them?

- In verses 21-22 Jesus lists many of the evil things that come out of our hearts. How can we fight back, and help one another fight back, against these evil things? What are we to do?

Other verses from this week: James 2:10; Revelation 20; Romans 3:19-20; Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.

Note 1: The Jews had the **Old Testament Law**, called the **Torah**. The most important laws were the **Ten Commandments**. And there were hundreds of other rules. But over the centuries the Jewish rabbis added thousands more rules and regulations. This was called the **Oral Law**, and it was passed down from generation to generation. It was eventually written down into a book called **The Mishnah**. Jesus' didn't recognize or obey these oral laws and this became a setting for Jesus to give us some important truths about tradition, righteousness, and sin.

Note 2: The Jews were very meticulous about obeying the multitude of laws in the Old Testament. The kosher laws had to do with the things that were clean and unclean. Some food was kosher, but certain foods weren't kosher and the Jews believed if they ate them, they would be defiled. The reason we like traditions, whether it's washing your hands for the Jews or us today dressing up for church, is that it is something we can do outwardly and feel good about ourselves. **NOTHING NECESSARILY WRONG WITH THAT.** But Jesus taught that righteousness wasn't a matter of outward religious practice; it is a matter of inward affection toward God.



Grow Group Guide | Week 9

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

In our study this week we will read of a Gentile woman following Jesus who boldly fell before the Master and begged Him with humble persistence for mercy and to heal her daughter. What can we learn from her faith, and Jesus's testing of her faith?

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Read Mark 7:24-30

- Even though this scene is very short and quick, Mark packs it full of interesting details. What stands out to you in these verses?
- In the opening to this event what was Jesus trying to do? In light of this, how did the woman approach Jesus?
 - What is important about how she approached Him?
 - What barriers did she have to overcome to get Jesus to listen to her? (e.g., cultural: a woman shouldn't approach a strange man; the disciples waving her off; Jesus ignoring her; Jesus seemingly insulting her) See also Matt. 15:21-28 for more details.
- The woman boldly fell at Jesus's feet and begged Him for mercy and to heal her daughter. Do we go before God with the same kind of boldness with our requests? (consider reading James 1:5-8)
 - Is begging something we view positively, or negatively? Are we too proud to beg, even if we're desperate?
 - Do we give up too easily, often throwing in the towel at the first barrier we face?
- A couple weeks ago we discussed storms, and had an opportunity to share storms we or those close to us have been in, or may be in the middle of. We can see a storm in this passage: the daughter consumed by demons, the mother not knowing what to do. How have storms brought you to a point of total desperation?
 - Are you desperate enough to cry to Jesus and be bold with your requests—whether they be for yourself, or for others? How far are you willing to go?
 - How much grace do we need in these situations of desperation? Or just to live every day?
 - Are we deserving of this grace? Why would Jesus extend any grace to us?
- Recapping from what we learned on Sunday, was Jesus insulting the woman when He called her a dog?

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- In verse 28 we see the woman respond to Jesus. What are some ways she *didn't* respond that might have been expected if we only read verse 27?
 - Did the woman disagree with what Jesus said to her?
 - How do these verses point toward the woman's persistence?
 - Why is it sometimes difficult to be persistent in our prayers?
 - Pastor Ted mentioned that "how we react [to troubles, trials, adversity] reveals our character." What was revealed here about the woman's character?
- Do you think you would react in the same way as the woman? Not too proud to beg, strong in faith, persistent, determined in the face of resistance? Content even with crumbs of grace?
- Jesus was testing the woman and her faith, whether she may have recognized it or not. How can we tell if God is testing our faith? Can we know?

Other verses from this week: Matthew 15:21-28; Hebrews 4:16; Matthew 15:24; Proverbs 12:16; Matthew 7:7; Mark 5:25-34; 1 Kings 5:10-14; Philippians 4:12-13; 1 Peter 1:7

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity. We recommend splitting into separate men/women prayer groups.



Grow Group Guide | Week 10

Bible Discussion (45-60 minutes)

As we wrap up our Winter Grow Group semester this week, we'll follow up Pastor Ted's sermon that looked at another of Jesus's miracles. It's a quick passage, one that might be all too easy to skim over without much thought ... but what makes this miracle, and Jesus' handling of the situation, different and important? We've attached Pastor Ted's sermon to help in answering any questions.

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Read Mark 7:31-37

- Who brought the deaf and mute man to Jesus? Why does this matter?
- Why would Jesus take the deaf and mute man aside privately, instead of healing him right there and then publicly?
- As we've seen thus far in Mark (and in general, as we know) Jesus can perform miracles in any way He chooses. Is there significance or meaning behind what He does leading up to healing the deaf and mute man (v. 33)? What is His purpose here in the process He uses?
- When a person sighs deeply, what does it usually reflect? What does Jesus's deep sigh here reflect?
 - Why did Mark include the original Aramaic word, *Ephphata*, Jesus said after sighing?
- In verse 35 Mark records that the deaf and mute man began to speak plainly. How, in particular, is this quite miraculous given the prior condition of the man?
- Jesus routinely commanded people He healed to not tell anyone, but they routinely disobeyed Him. Why would He make the command again here?
 - Do you tell people about what Jesus has done for you?
 - Have the tables turned? ... Back then Jesus couldn't keep people quiet about Him, but flashing forward to today, many have a hard time talking about Jesus and sharing what He is doing in their life.
- What stands out to you about the reaction people had in verse 37 hearing about this miracle Jesus performed and seeing the man themselves?
- What does it mean in v. 37 when Mark quotes the people saying "He has done everything well" ?
 - What does it mean to do everything well?
 - Is this a compliment, or does it reflect something else?
- What is it that the Pharisees, being well versed in Old Testament prophecy, didn't see in Jesus to recognize who He is?

- How can we relate to the deaf and mute man? Are we sometimes similar to how the man was before he was healed? Or are we sometimes like how the man was after he was healed?
- What are you struggling with today? Does this make you bitter, or cause you to lean more on Jesus?

Activity: On index cards, have each person write on their card their biggest takeaway from this semester's Grow Group sessions. This could be a scripture passage they read, a testimony someone shared, or a friendship they have made (it may help to remind the group of the stories/passages we have covered the last 10 weeks). Give them a few minutes to think about it. Once everyone has written something down, have each group member share their takeaway.

Other verses from this week: Mark 8:22-26; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Isaiah 35:5-6; Job 3:24; Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:4; Romans 8:22-23, 26; Luke 8

Prayer (15-20 Minutes)

Use your wisdom to lead a prayer time in a way that allows for growth opportunity.