

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of March 31, 2013

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## Welcome to the Spring Quarter of Growth Groups!

This week we kick off our Spring Growth Group quarter. Your first meeting will most likely include a potluck dinner, time to get acquainted with any new members, as well as time to discuss the Growth Group Covenant. The homework has been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish each of these.

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great first meeting as you come together to connect and encourage one another to grow and to see God change our lives from the inside out!

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## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Last weekend we celebrated Easter. What were some of your favorite Easter traditions growing up?

Are there any Easter traditions you're happy to leave back in childhood?

2. Larry pointed out the "Six Faces Of Jesus" which are different views of how we see or understand who Jesus is. Which of the "Six Faces Of Jesus" do you think most people would identify with?

Which face(s) did you most identify with before hearing the sermon?

3. Looking back at your notes from "*Hope Rising*," was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Over the weekend we were reminded that we know the end of the story, and knowing the ending ought to change our perspective in the midst of tough times. Despite knowing this, we're often consumed with worry to the point of losing hope. What encouragement does Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 give to help us overcome our fears or feeling of hopelessness?

Can you think of any fears that consistently pop up in your life and cause you to lose hope?

2. As Larry pointed out, Easter seems to be getting smaller in significance each year while Christmas gets larger and larger. In addition to that, our Easter traditions (although fun and rewarding if you find Easter eggs with money in them) don't usually point to the significance of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. How do the insights into Jesus' sacrifice in Isaiah 53 change or add to your view of the significance of Easter?

How does 1 John 4:9-13 further explain Easter and what our part is in being on "special assignment?"

### **TAKING IT HOME**

1. Looking back on "The Difference A King Makes" is there any "special assignment" task you'd like to take on in the coming weeks?

2. As we begin a new Growth Group quarter, what are one or two things you're looking forward to?

## **THE PURPOSE OF GROWTH GROUPS**

Growth Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). Here's how it will happen:

### **SHARE**

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

### **STUDY**

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

### **SUPPORT**

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another and meeting real needs.

### **SERVE**

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

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### Ephesians 3:14-21

A Prayer for the Ephesians

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power

through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. [NIV]

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### **Isaiah 53**

- 1 Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
- 2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
- 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
- 4 Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.
- 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.
- 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.
- 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.  
Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was punished.  
9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.  
10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.  
11 After he has suffered,  
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,  
and he will bear their iniquities.  
12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,  
because he poured out his life unto death,  
and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors. [NIV]

How does 1 John 4:9-13 further explain Easter and what our part is in being on "special assignment?"

### **1 John 4:9-13**

9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.  
13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. [NIV]

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