

Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 15, 2013

Welcome to the Fall Quarter of Growth Groups!

This week we kick off our Fall Growth Group quarter. Your first meeting will include a potluck dinner, time to get acquainted, as well as time to discuss your Growth Group Covenant. The homework has been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish this.

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, encourage one another to grow and to see God change your lives from the inside out!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. What's something you did this past summer that was fun or enjoyable – i.e. going to a movie, swimming, family gathering, vacation, barbeque, etc?

2. What was your favorite television character or cartoon character when you were a child?

What did you like about that character?

3. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We heard this weekend how fearful Joseph's brothers were after their father died because they still weren't sure if Joseph had forgiven them. What they learned was that not only had he been able to forgive them, but he had also had been able to see God working for good in spite of their evil intentions. Like Joseph's brothers, we also can struggle accepting God's forgiveness of our sins and past mistakes.

What encouragement do the passages following passages provide for understanding and accepting God's love and forgiveness for us?

Isaiah 1:18

Psalm 32:5

Psalm 103:8-14

1 John 1:8-9

It's comforting to know that God forgives us, but some have used that truth to justify sinning even more. How would you answer someone who says, "Since God will forgive my sins, what's to stop me from going out and sinning and then asking for God's forgiveness?"

2. Larry gave us six lessons from our study of Genesis. Looking back on this list, which of the lessons stood out to you the most?

Which of these lessons is most applicable in your life right now?

TAKING IT HOME

In preparation for going over the Covenant in your Growth Group, take a moment to jot down some of the reasons you joined a Growth Group this quarter. What are you looking forward to the most?

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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What encouragement do the passages following passages provide for understanding and accepting God's love and forgiveness for us?

Isaiah 1:18

18 "Come now, let us settle the matter,"
says the Lord.

"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool. [NIV]

Psalm 32:5

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord."

And you forgave
the guilt of my sin. [NIV]

Psalm 103:8-14

8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

14 for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust. [NIV]

1 John 1:8-9

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. [NIV]

It's comforting to know that God forgives us, but some have used that truth to justify sinning even more. How would you answer someone who says, "Since God will forgive my sins, what's to stop me from going out and sinning and then asking for God's forgiveness?"

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