

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 28, 2014

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## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. What's the weirdest job you've ever had or what's the strangest task you've had to do in your current job?

2. While growing up, was there anything you told yourself "If I had \_\_\_\_\_, life would be complete?"

Did you ever get it and if so, did it give you what you thought it would?

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. The story of Miriam reminds us that anyone can get off track when they become envious of other people. A simple cure for envy comes when we strive for contentment on a daily basis and focus on changing our perspective of what we have. What strategies in the following verses could help someone who's struggling with being content?

Philippians 2:3-4

Matthew 6:31-33

Galatians 6:9-10

Which of the verses above is most helpful to you in terms of striving toward being content?

What are some ways (either healthy or unhealthy) that you've dealt with temptations to be envious or not be content?

2. Larry mentioned this weekend that "life is not fair." However, it's important to remember that focusing on how unfair things are often keeps us feeling stuck. How could the land owner's response in Matthew 20:1-16 help us to refocus when feeling life isn't fair?

What's your reaction to the landowner paying the early and late workers the same pay?

What hope could Revelation 21:1-5 give to someone who thinks life is unfair?

3. God's provision and blessings don't always come in the way we had hoped or imagined. Similar to Miriam and Aaron, we can get caught up in comparison and lose focus on God's blessings in our own life. The simple truth is God has blessed us all far beyond what we could ever ask for. How do the following verses broaden our understanding of how God blesses us whether we realize it or not?

Romans 3:23-24

Ephesians 2:4-10

1 John 1:9

After reading these verses, how would you answer someone who asked you what it means to be blessed?

### **TAKING IT HOME**

What habit or practice would you like to implement during the next few weeks to focus on having gratitude and being content on a daily basis?

Do you have any prayer requests you'd like to share with your group?

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## DIGGING DEEPER

1. The story of Miriam reminds us that anyone can get off track when they become envious of other people. A simple cure for envy comes when we strive for contentment on a daily basis and focus on changing our perspective of what we have. What strategies in the following verses could help someone who's struggling with being content?

### Philippians 2:3-4

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. [NIV]

### Matthew 6:31-33

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. [NIV]

### Galatians 6:9-10

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. [NIV]

Which of the verses above is most helpful to you in terms of striving toward being content?

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### **Matthew 20:1-16**

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

3 "About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. 4 He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' 5 So they went.

"He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. 6 About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

7 "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

8 "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

9 "The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. 10 So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. 11 When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 12 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

13 "But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? 14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

16 "So the last will be first, and the first will be last." [NIV]

What's your reaction to the landowner paying the early and late workers the same pay?

What hope could Revelation 21:1-5 give to someone who thinks life is unfair?

### **Revelation 21:1-5**

A New Heaven and a New Earth

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new

Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." [NIV]

3. God's provision and blessings don't always come in the way we had hoped or imagined. Similar to Miriam and Aaron, we can get caught up in comparison and lose focus on God's blessings in our own life. The simple truth is God has blessed us all far beyond what we could ever ask for. How do the following verses broaden our understanding of how God blesses us whether we realize it or not?

**Romans 3:23-24**

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. [NIV]

**Ephesians 2:4-10**

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. [NIV]

**1 John 1:9**

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. [NIV]

After reading these verses, how would you answer someone who asked you what it means to be blessed?

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