

## It's Never Too Late

### The Gospel In A Nutshell

Ephesians 5:5-6 & Galatians 5:19-21/ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 & 1 Corinthians 6:11

- We all have a problem we can't **FIX**.
- Jesus paid the price to **FIX IT**.
- The resurrection is the proof He **FIXED IT**.

### Joseph's Story

Isaiah 53:8-9/ Philipians 2:3-9/ Matthew 27:57-61  
Mark 15:42-47 (Mark 14:53-65)/ Luke 23:50-56 (Mark 14:61-65)/ John 19:38-42

- Joseph was a **RICH DISCIPLE**.
- He was a **PROMINENT** member of Jesus's chief accusers.
- He disagreed with the council's decision, but **DIDN'T SPEAK UP**.
- He kept silent because he **FEARED** what he'd **LOSE**.
- Despite his horrible start, God didn't **WRITE HIM OFF**.
- Despite their great start, the disciples were **AWOL**.

### Three Incredibly Important Life Lessons

1. A **GOOD START** doesn't guarantee a **HAPPY ENDING**.  
2 Chronicles 26/ Matthew 13:1-23 & 21:28-32/ 1 Peter 5:9/ 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
2. A **BAD START** doesn't preclude a **HAPPY ENDING**.  
John 19:38-42/ 1 Timothy 1:12-16/ Matthew 21:28-32/ Proverbs 24:16/ 1 Corinthians 6:11
3. Never write **OFF ANYONE** - including **YOURSELF**!  
Mark 2:17/ Revelation 12:10/ 1 John 2:1-2

# Life Group Study Questions

For the week of January 12, 2020

## Welcome to the Winter Quarter of Life Groups!

*This week we kick off our Winter Life Group Quarter. Your first meeting will include a potluck dinner and time to get acquainted, as well as time to discuss your Life Group Covenant. The study questions have been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish all of this.*

*To prepare for your first meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great meeting as you come together to connect, encourage one another to grow and see how God might work!*

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- Would you rather...
  - ... sew all your clothes or grow your own food?
  - ... win the lottery or live twice as long?
  - ... eat pizza or ice cream as your only food for eternity?
  - ... be reborn a 100 years in the past or in the future?
  - ... work in a group or work alone?
  
- In 2020 which one of the following do you hope to experience the most and why?
  - Adventure
  - Relaxation
  - Challenge
  - Fun
  - Something else ( \_\_\_\_\_ )
  
- Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

### DIGGING DEEPER

The great news we heard this weekend is it's "never too late" to follow Jesus. Many people would have thought Saul, later to be named Paul, would never turn his life toward Jesus. As you read his incredible story of change in Acts 9:1-31, what catches your attention the most and why?

**Acts 9:1-31** - *Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.<sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.<sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."<sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.<sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.<sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.<sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.<sup>11</sup> The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.<sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias*

come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”<sup>13</sup> “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.”<sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”<sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”<sup>17</sup> Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,<sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.<sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.<sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?”<sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.<sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him,<sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him.<sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.<sup>26</sup> When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.<sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.<sup>28</sup> So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.<sup>29</sup> He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him.<sup>30</sup> When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.<sup>31</sup> Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Which people and situations in Saul’s conversion story do you relate to the most?

Trusting that Saul had really changed was no small challenge in this story. We can all end up leaning toward one extreme or the other in regard to trusting too quickly or being too critical. Which one is your tendency?

How do the following verses help us know how to engage others in a hope-filled way and balance these two extremes?

**Philippians 1:6** - *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

**Matthew 18:21-22** - *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

**Proverbs 14:7-9** - *Stay away from a fool, for you will not find knowledge on their lips.<sup>8</sup> The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception.<sup>9</sup> Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.*

## LOOKING AHEAD

One of the key reasons we meet in Life Groups every week is to gain the encouragement and support we each need to keep our focus on Jesus. Before you go over the Covenant in your group, take a moment and write down your responses to the questions below:

What are you looking forward to in your Life Group this quarter?

Is there anything specific in your life you want to put extra focus on to grow yourself spiritually this quarter?

*\*Passages cited are NIV – New International Version*

## THE PURPOSE OF LIFE GROUPS

Life 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.



### COMMUNITY SERVICE IMPACT

Community Service is a ministry of North Coast Church dedicated to being the hands and feet of Jesus and showing God's love in tangible ways through service to the community. There are many options for you to serve. For ideas, check out

[NorthCoastCommunityService.org](http://NorthCoastCommunityService.org)