



LIFEgroup Study Guide

September 13 - November 8

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
[www.lbf.church/messages]

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*
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That They May See

Lesson 1 • September 13 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Believers in Jesus reflect his light to the world.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

Getting Started

1. Use one sentence to describe the relationship that believers in Jesus are meant to have to the world.

4. Notice that Jesus does not say to his disciples, “Be the light of the world.” He says, “You are the light of the world.” Why is this difference significant?

2. What are some benefits that light brings about?

5. In John 8:12, Jesus says of himself, “I am the light of the world.” What do you think is the relationship between Jesus’ light and our light?

Digging In

Read Matthew 5:14-16.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

6. What stands out to you the most about Jesus’ two illustrations about the town and the lamp?

7. Jesus ends verse 16 by pointing us to the goal: “that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” How is this goal different than other goals we sometimes have in how we, as Christians, relate to the world around us?

11. The one command in this passage is for believers to let their light shine. Name at least three specific ways that believers can let their light shine.

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In Matthew 6:1, Jesus warns, "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." How can we reconcile this warning with Jesus' command to "let your light shine before others?"

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Read 2 Corinthians 4:6, which relates the gospel message to God's light. What are some ways that the gospel message of Jesus sheds light for us?

Taking It To Heart

10. As you think about your life, are there any ways to hide your lamp under a bowl? If so, why do you think you are doing this?

One Race

Lesson 2 • September 20 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Through the gospel, Jesus has broken down all racial and ethnic barriers.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways that you observe race and ethnicity dividing people today?

2. Share a personal experience you have had that has impacted your perspective toward race and race relations.

Digging In

Read Ephesians 2:11-18.

"¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at

that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. According to verses 11-13, what are some reasons why ethnic Jews and Gentiles felt divided from one another?

5. Paul uses the word “one” in verse 14 (made the two groups one), verse 15 (one new humanity), and verse 16 (in one body). He talks about the oneness of all believers not as an aspiration, but as a fact. How does this impact your perspective toward racial and ethnic differences among Christians?

6. In verse 17, Paul talks about peace. What do you see as the connection between Christians having peace with God and having peace with one another?

7. According to verse 18, all believers—regardless of ethnicity—have the same access to the same Father through the same Spirit. How does this practically unite Christians?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In this passage, Paul speaks of Christian unity as something that Jesus already accomplished. At the same time, in Ephesians 4:3, he says, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." What do you think is the connection between

seeing unity as something that Jesus accomplished and as something that we have the responsibility to foster? Use an illustration if you can think of one.

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Paul teaches that ethnic and racial unity has been accomplished not through legislation or panel discussions or better education, but through “the blood of Christ (verse 13).” What does this tell you about how significant racial and ethnic unity is to the gospel message?

Taking It To Heart

10. Think again about the racial and ethnic divides you see in the U.S. (and the world). How do you believe the gospel of Jesus can provide a practical foundation for bridging those divides?

11. No one person can unilaterally fix the ethnic and racial divisions that exist. That said, what specifically do you sense that God is calling you to do to put the gospel on display through fostering ethnic and racial unity?

Disciples Making Disciples

Lesson 3 • September 27 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The core calling of Jesus' church is to make disciples.

Getting Started

1. What first comes to your mind when you think of the word "disciple?"

2. To be a disciple is to be a student or an apprentice. What is the difference between seeing yourself as someone who "believes in" Jesus and someone who is Jesus' "apprentice?"

Digging In

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some

doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Verses 16-17 say that when the disciples saw Jesus, "they worshiped him; but some doubted." What does this tell you about the battle of faith, even among those who worship Jesus?

5. How does the authority of Jesus (verse 18) impact your perspective toward the command to make disciples of all nations?

6. Jesus speaks of "baptizing" and "teaching" as aspects of making disciples. How is the command to make disciples different from a command to make "converts?"

7. How does Jesus' promise at the end of verse 20 impact you personally as you think of the command to make disciples?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Do you think the command to make disciples of all nations applies to all Christians? Do you see it as more of an individual command or a corporate command? Explain your answer.

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Think of the blessings and benefits that you have because of the gospel of Jesus. How does this make the command to "make disciples" more compelling?

Taking It To Heart

10. When you think of yourself as Jesus' disciple, how does that impact your perspective about your relationship with him?

11. Not every Christian has the same part to play in the Great Commission (Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations). What do you see as your role in helping the church to fulfill this command?



Him We Proclaim

Lesson 4 • October 4 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The core message of the church is Jesus.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

Getting Started

1. Have you ever observed people make the claim that Jesus supports or endorses their cause? If so, describe the situation.

4. Paul begins verse 28 by saying, “He”—Christ—“is the one we proclaim.” What do you think is the significance of the fact that Paul says that we proclaim a person as opposed to a concept or idea?

2. What are some ways that you think people misunderstand the core Christian message?

5. Focus in on Paul’s statement about “admonishing and teaching.” Do you think he is speaking more about proclaiming the gospel to non-Christians or encouraging Christians? Do you think he is talking more about one-on-one situations or a formal public message? Share the reasons for your answer.

Digging In

Read Colossians 1:28-29.

²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing, and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.”

6. Paul says that the goal of proclaiming Christ is to “present everyone fully mature in Christ.” Describe some characteristics that would be present in a person who was fully mature in Christ.

7. Why do you think Paul follows the strong statements in verse 28 with what he says in verse 29?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. It can be a temptation for individual Christians and churches to be more known for proclaiming a cause than for proclaiming Christ. For example, we might proclaim a political party, a candidate, a law, a health system, an educational model, or a moral code as our main message. How do you think believers can make Jesus the center of our proclamation without ignoring other important moral and societal issues?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. In verse 29, Paul writes about the “energy Christ so powerfully works in” him. How does the idea of Christ being the one who supplies the power connection

to the message about Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection?

Taking It To Heart

10. Just as Christians don't all have the same role in making disciples of all nations, not all Christians have identical roles in proclaiming Christ. What are some different ways that Christians can use their gifts and resources to support the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus?

11. Paul wrote about his goal being that people would be “fully mature in Christ.” We know that we will not reach sinless perfection before Jesus returns. That said, in what area(s) do you sense that God is calling you to work toward greater maturity in Christ?



Him We Proclaim

Lesson 5 • October 11 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Marriage is meant to be a window into the gospel.

Getting Started

1. Name what you believe to be the main three reasons why people get married.

2. What are some reasons why so many marriages today are either in crisis or are ending in divorce?

Digging In

Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love

your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Talking today about wives submitting to husbands is difficult and counter-cultural. In verses 22-24, how does this submission relate to the gospel message?

5. Look now at verses 25-28. How does the call for husbands to love their wives relate to the gospel message?

6. Sometimes as Americans, we talk about the need for self-love. What does Paul say in verse 29 about self-love?

7. In verse 31, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24, which speaks about marriage. Look at his statement in verse 32. What does he seem to be saying about marriage?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. This passage calls both husbands and wives to self-sacrifice for the greater purpose of putting the gospel on display through their marriages. In light of this, how seriously should Christians take it when they don't feel fulfilled in their marriages?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. What are some tangible ways that a good marriage could serve as a way for people to see the gospel of Jesus?

Taking It To Heart

10. If you are married, what are some tangible ways to live out the teachings in this passage that are directed toward husbands and wives? If you are unmarried, what do you think you can do to support husbands and wives in living out this passage?

11. What do you see as some ways that the body of Christ can build up marriages so that they are indeed a window into the gospel?



Decorations

Lesson 6 • October 18 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Each believer has an individual calling to demonstrate the beauty of the gospel.

Getting Started

1. Share about a time when your life circumstances made you feel like you were limited in doing great things for God.

2. Give some examples of simple, everyday things that Christians can do to demonstrate trust and hope in the gospel of Jesus.

Digging In

Read Titus 2:1-10.

"¹ You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. ² Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled,

and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

³ Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

⁶ Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸ and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. ⁹ Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰ and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Why do you think Paul gives different instructions to different groups of people?

5. Identify yourself in one of the four groups in verses 1-8. What part of your section stands out to you the most, and why?

6. Look at the three “so that” statements in this passage (the end of verses 5, 8, and 10). How do these three statements tie this passage together?

7. Paul ends the passage by speaking to slaves. Slaves were obviously in a situation that no one desired to be in, and yet Paul has a message for them. How do you think this parallels undesirable situations that we might find ourselves in?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. What do you think is the difference between wanting to "make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" and seeking the world's approval?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Jesus submitted to his Father's will, to bring about salvation to all of us. How can Jesus' submission to the role he was called to play empower us to embrace the roles we are called to play in putting the gospel on display?

Taking It To Heart

10. How do you think the body of Christ can live out this passage not only as individuals but as a group?

11. What is one specific way to be more intentional as you seek to put the gospel on display to the world around you?



Let Justice Roll

Lesson 7 • October 25 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God values justice more than ritual.

to the music of your harps. ²⁴ But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

Getting Started

1. How do you define justice?

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

2. What do you think is the role of believers in Jesus as it relates to the pursuit of justice in society?

4. In verses 21-23 God speaks about his distaste in Israel's festivals, offerings, and songs. What do you see as the common bond between these three aspects of life in Israel?

Digging In

Read Amos 5:21-24.

²¹ "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. ²² Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

²³ Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen

5. If God wanted to communicate the same message of this passage to U.S. Christians in 2020, how do you think it might be written?

6. What does it conjure up in your mind when you hear the word picture of "justice and righteousness rolling down like water?"

7. Read Matthew 23:23. How does this verse in Matthew, along with this passage in Amos, reveal God's priorities?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. God is not interested in Israel's worship, while Israel is perverting justice. But no Christian or church is ever completely free from sin, compromise, or hypocrisy. Does this mean that our worship is never acceptable to God? Explain your answer.

Connecting With The Gospel

9. This passage revealed that we cannot manipulate God with our rituals. Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please God." How is faith different than the practice of religious rituals?

Taking It To Heart

10. How can Christians practice and pursue justice without making it just one more religious ritual?

11. What are some practical ways that the body of Christ can practice and pursue justice in the U.S. in 2020?

The Least of These

Lesson 8 • November 1 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God's people are called to care for the vulnerable as if they were Jesus himself.

Getting Started

1. Name some different groups of people who you see as vulnerable today.

2. When you see someone who is in financial or legal trouble, are you more likely to assume that it is because of outside factors out of their control or because of poor choices of their own?

Digging In

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' ⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' ⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' ⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did

not do for me.’⁴⁶ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. What are some assumptions about the identity of Jesus built into the scene that he describes in verses 31-33?

5. What significance do you draw from the fact that those caring for the needy were not aware that they were—by proxy—caring for Jesus?

6. Take each type of person that Jesus names and develop a modern equivalent in the U.S. today:

- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Stranger
- Unclothed
- Sick
- In Prison

7. What is revealed about Jesus’ values in the idea that he identifies with the “least of these”?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Is tough love ever appropriate, or are Christians always called to “bail people out” when they are in tough times? Explain your answer.

Connecting With The Gospel

9. In isolation, it could seem like Jesus is proclaiming a works salvation, saying that entrance into his kingdom is dependent upon caring for “the least of these” instead of being dependent upon us placing our faith in Jesus. Why do you think Jesus speaks so strongly about the consequences of our decisions to care for—or neglect—the needy?

Taking It To Heart

10. Are there ways that your attitude needs to change toward people who fit into Jesus’ category of “the least of these”? If so, how?

11. In what specific ways do you believe God is calling you to participate as the body of Christ shows care for the least of these?



Citizens

Lesson 9 • November 8 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

As Christians, our primary citizenship is in heaven.

Getting Started

1. What role—if any—do you think patriotism should play in the life of a Christian?

2. What are some dangers that can happen when Christians become strongly committed to a political party or political candidate?

Digging In

Read Philippians 3:17-21.

"¹⁷ Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again

even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. "

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. In light of verses 17-18, summarize in one sentence the context of this passage.

5. In verse 19, Paul describes the "enemies of the cross" and those whose mind is set on earthly things. What are some different ways a person's mind can be set on earthly things?

6. In verse 20, after saying that "our citizenship is in heaven," Paul says that it is from heaven that we await a Savior. How is awaiting our Savior Jesus different than awaiting a political "savior?"

7. According to verse 21, what kind of salvation is Jesus going to bring to citizens of heaven?

Taking It To Heart

10. After every presidential election, many are elated, and many are disappointed. Specifically, how do you think God is calling you to respond to this most recent presidential election?

11. Are there ways that you have been looking to "saviors" apart from Jesus? If so, how can you repent of this and place your hope more fully in Jesus?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Could it be dangerous for Christians to be so mindful of their citizenship in heaven that they neglect their role on earth? If so, give an example of what this might look like.

Connecting With The Gospel

9. The central proclamation of the gospel is that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10). How does this proclamation relate to how Christians view politics?