



LIFEgroup Study Guide

April 18 - April 25

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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]

Lesson 1: Rushing Back to Idols
Genesis 35:1-5 • Pg. 5-6 • April 18

Lesson 2: Divided We Fall
Romans 14:1-9 • Pg. 7-9 • April 25

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church is always ready to help you understand God's word. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*
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PREPARING TO EXIT

Rushing Back to Idols

Lesson 1 • April 18 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

To follow the one true God, we have to rid ourselves of idols.

Introduction

This past year has been a year of loss for many of us. For some of us, that loss relates to sickness and death that we experienced in our personal circles. For others, that loss relates to the loss of certain freedoms that we previously enjoyed but were casualties of the pandemic and the subsequent shutdown. For all of us, there are ways that the pandemic has changed our routines and habits.

The fact is, though, that part of what many of us lost during this shutdown was idols. Some lost the idol of kids' sports and activities. Some lost the idol of travel and recreation. Some lost the idol of having church be a comfortable place to consume religious goods and services. Part of what God has been doing during the pandemic is to strip us of our idols.

Now that we seem to be getting closer and closer to being reopened, many of those idols are going to be available in our lives once more. Kids' sports (and professional sports) are returning to our lives. Restaurants, amusement parks, movie theaters and concerts are quickly becoming a reality once more. Life is getting closer and closer to returning to “normal.”

While these reopenings are worth celebrating, we as Christians must also pause and consider what God is calling us to do. Are we about to rush back to the idols that God removed from our lives? And is it God's plan for us to get as quickly as possible back to a comfortable life, free from panic and government overreach? If a return to “normal” is our priority, we may waste a golden opportunity that God has given us for profound change.

While we celebrate reopening, we must also be warned. Idols are coming for us! This lesson provides an opportunity for us to identify the idols that pose the greatest threat to us, and to make intentional choices to not return to the idols that keep us from fixing our eyes fully on Jesus.

Getting Started

1. For the purpose of this lesson, an idol is anything that we might use to replace God. What are some idols that you are tempted to trust?

2. How did this pandemic—and the shutdown—impact your access to different potential idols in your life?

Digging In

Read Genesis 35:1-5.

1 Then God said to Jacob, “Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau.”

2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were

with him, “Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. 3 Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone.” 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. 5 Then they set out, and the terror of God fell on the towns all around them so that no one pursued them.

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. Read Genesis 28:10-22, which provides the backdrop for what God says to Jacob in verse 1. What stands out to you about that story?

5. According to verse 2, some members of Jacob’s household still had “foreign gods” in their possession. What do you think might have led them to want to keep these idols around?

6. According to verse 3, what does Jacob think his household will be free to do once they get rid of their idols?

7. In verse 5, we are told that “the terror of God fell on the towns all around them”. God protected Jacob from potential enemies. What are some potential enemies you face that tempt you to hold onto idols?

Connecting to the Gospel

8. We run to idols when we think they can give us something we need. In the gospel of Jesus, God has addressed our deepest needs by reconciling us to himself. In what ways does God address the need that sometimes drives you to idols?

Taking It To Heart

9. As we get closer and closer to being back to “normal” after the pandemic, what are some idols that could be coming your way?

10. What steps can you take now to get rid of any idols as you look to follow Jesus into the future?

PREPARING TO EXIT

Divided We Fall

Lesson 2 • April 25 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Christian unity calls us to accept those who Jesus accepts.

Introduction

God loves for his people to be unified. Satan loves to divide and conquer. Division has always been a threat to Jesus' church. This past year we have seen multiple significant issues threaten the unity of believers. We have seen a pandemic that has led to arguments about masks and vaccines and church meetings. We have seen political unrest that has split us along political party lines. We have seen a contentious presidential election. And, all the while, we have had the added tensions of many being cooped up in their homes, dealing with bottled up anger and frustration.

While God has been at work powerfully this past year, I think few Christians would point it as a wonderful season of Christian unity. It is clear that growth needs to happen. This applies to each individual church and it also applies to the Christian community on a broader scale.

Part of how we foster unity is by having clarity on what is essential and what is not. There are Christian essentials that are occasions to take strong stands and even divide from those who disagree. The supremacy of Jesus Christ is an essential. The trustworthiness of the Bible is an essential. Salvation through Christ alone is an essential. The amazing triune nature of God is an essential. And the Bible's moral teachings on sexuality and on racial unity are essential.

But not everything is essential. And much of the division that exists between Christians is over matters that, in this lesson's passage, the Apostle Paul called "disputable". This lesson provides the opportunity to

commit to Christian unity and see how each of us can play our part. When Christians show love and flexibility on disputable matters, we demonstrate to the world that Jesus is able to unite a diverse group of people because he is more important to us than our personal preferences.

Getting Started

1. What are some issues that have unnecessarily divided Christians over this past year during the pandemic?
2. What are some of the negative results of Christians not being more united?

Digging In

Read Romans 14:1-9.

1 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat

everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

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

4. In verse 1 Paul speaks of “disputable matters,” which relate to the idea that Christians are allowed to make different choices concerning issues that God has not spoken authoritatively about. What are some examples of disputable matters in our current culture?

5. What does Paul say in verse 4 about why we should not “treat with contempt” or “judge” those who make different choices on disputable matters?

6. How do Paul’s words in verse 6 guide Christians in how we make godly decisions about disputable matters?

7. In this passage Paul is not saying that every Christian should just do whatever they feel like. How do verses 7-9 demonstrate the foundation for decision-making for believers?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. How can we know the differences between issues on which all Christians should agree and those on which Christians are free to disagree with one another?

Connecting to the Gospel

9. The gospel message—that God sent Jesus for us so that we can be reconciled to him—is what unites all Christians. Name at least three ways that the gospel message can bring Christian unity.

Taking It To Heart

10. Are you more likely to have contempt for people who are being more cautious on disputable matters or to judge those who take more liberties on disputable matters? Explain your answer.

11. How can you actively fight for unity in the church during this time of significant division?