

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:*
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:*
danfranklin@lbfchurch.com

Lesson 9: Family Comes First

Matthew 10:34-39 • Pg. 4-5 • November 14

Lesson 10: Safety Comes First

Acts 20:22-24 • Pg. 6-7 • November 21

Lesson 11: You Only Live Once

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 • Pg. 8-9 • November 28

Lesson 12: America Is God's Chosen Nation

1 Peter 2:9-10 • Pg. 10-11 • December 5

Lesson 13: I Need to Be on the Right Side of History

Hebrews 13:11-14 • Pg. 12-13 • December 12



Family Comes First

Lesson 9 • November 14 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Cultural Message

Family is our first priority.

Biblical Message

Commitment to Jesus supersedes commitment to family.

Introduction

What could possibly be wrong with the statement, “Family comes first?” Even if it is not technically in the Bible, it seems to many that only good could come from this belief. It will keep people from being workaholics, and it will remind us that at the end of our lives we won’t wish that we had spent more time at the office. It seems like a safe and clean statement.

But the statement, on top of being unbiblical, poses some true threats to us living out our faith in Jesus. First of all, if we place family first, then we can use this to justify all the activities that keep us busy, as they distract us from serving Jesus and his church. Second of all, if we place family first, then we will have a hard time rejecting the values of our extended family if they choose to reject Jesus.

Does this mean that Christians care nothing for family? Not at all. But as we look at Jesus’ words in Matthew 10, we get a sobering reminder of where family fits into our commitment to follow Jesus.

Getting Started

1. What are some positive results that can come from the mentality of “Family comes first”?

2. What are some negative results that can come from the mentality of “Family comes first”?

Digging In

Read Matthew 10:34-39.

34 Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—36 a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.”

37 Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

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. Look at verses 34-36. In what way might family members be turned against one another because of Jesus?

5. How might it change the way that family members relate to one another if they love Jesus more than they love one another?

6. Look at Jesus' statements in verses 37-38 about being "worthy of" him, and read similar statements he makes in Luke 14:26-27. What do you think Jesus means when he says that those who are not fully committed to him are not worthy of him?

7. Focus on verse 39. How might the need to "lose" your "life" relate to what Jesus says earlier in the passage about family?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Do you think following Jesus leads to people loving their families more or less? Explain your answer.

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Jesus is very clear that following him may cost us our families. What makes Jesus worth following despite this heavy cost? Be specific.

Taking It To Heart

10. How do you personally feel most tempted to treat your family as if they are more important than Jesus?

11. If you are a parent with children in the home, what changes would need to take place for your children to see and know that nothing is more important to your family than Jesus?

4. In verse 22, Paul says that he is going to take a risky trip to Jerusalem because he is “compelled by the Spirit.” What might the Holy Spirit compel a believer today to do?

5. In verse 23, Paul says that he knows that prison and hardship await him in Jerusalem. Have you ever willingly done something that you knew would result in pain and discomfort for you? If so, share the story.

6. What do you think Paul means when he says, “I consider my life worth nothing to me”?

7. Paul’s consuming focus was “the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” How does Paul’s focus apply to believers in Jesus today?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. What are some ways to tell the difference between reckless risk-taking and godly risk-taking?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Believers in Jesus are promised eternal life. How does this impact our ability to take risks for Jesus?

Taking It To Heart

10. What message do you think it sends to the world when Christians are willing to put themselves in danger in order to follow Jesus?

11. In your life right now, what is one risk that you sense the Holy Spirit is calling you to take? What do you stand to lose if you take this risk?



You Only Live Once

Lesson 11 • November 28 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The Cultural Message

You only have one life to live, so make the most of it.

The Biblical Message

Because Jesus has promised us eternal life, we can live today in hope of eternity.

Introduction

In 2007, Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman starred in *The Bucket List*, a movie about two aging cancer patients who tried to complete a list of accomplishments before they “kick the bucket” and die. Ever since that movie, the term “bucket list” has become a cultural touchpoint. People—including many Christians—talk regularly about checking items off their bucket lists.

The mindset behind *The Bucket List* is that we only have a short time on this planet and we need to maximize our experiences before our time runs out. After all, once we die it’s all over.

But is that what Christians believe? Do we believe that we need to live in a panic-stricken mode of filling our lives with experiences before our time runs out? In this lesson we will look at a passage that reminds us that, as believers in Jesus, it isn’t true that we only live once.

Getting Started

1. Why do you think the concept of a “bucket list” has become so popular in American culture?

2. What are some potential downsides of embracing the popular phrase “you only live once”?

Digging In

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

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 verse 16, how does Paul contrast what is happening to us outwardly versus what is happening to us inwardly?

5. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. After reading those verses, what do you think of Paul describing his troubles as “light and momentary” (verse 17)?

6. In verse 18, Paul talks about realities that are “unseen.” For those of us who are believers in Jesus, what are some realities that are currently unseen?

7. What do you think it takes for us to “fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen”?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. What might Christians miss out on if they focus on checking items off their (literal or metaphorical) bucket list?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Jesus spoke of his suffering preceding his glory (Luke 24:26). What are some examples of the glory that Jesus received after his suffering?

Taking It To Heart

10. If you truly dedicate your life to following Jesus, what are some experiences that you might end up missing out on?

11. If you embrace the truth that in Jesus you have eternal life, what is at least one practical way in which your life would change?



America Is God's Chosen Nation

Lesson 12 • December 5 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The Cultural Message

The United States of America has a unique status before God.

The Biblical Message

For believers in Jesus, our true nation is the church, the body of Christ.

Introduction

There are a number of prominent Christians today who claim that the United States has a unique relationship with God. Some even claim that the United States has a covenant relationship with God, and that we are on a similar status to Old Testament Israel. There is certainly no mention of the United States in Scripture, and yet this claim has become an assumption for some.

Many of us may not buy into the idea that the United States has a covenant with God, and yet we may think it is natural to believe that the United States is a uniquely great country, and that our status as Americans is something to find pride in. These thoughts force us to ask questions about the proper role of patriotism in the lives of Christians.

Since there are no passages in the Bible that deal with the covenant status of the United States, this lesson will cover a passage that deals with the identity of believers, a passage that uses national language in order to describe us. This passage will challenge us both about our status with our country and also about our calling to our country.

Getting Started

1. What are some uniquely good aspects of the United States? What are some uniquely bad characteristics of the United States?

2. Do you think God views different nations differently? Explain your answer.

Digging In

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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 stands out to you most in the four ways that Peter describes believers in the first half of verse 9?

5. According to the second half of verse 9, the goal of the church is to “declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” What are some other messages that the church might be tempted to “declare” in our culture today?

6. What does verse 10 tell you about how your identity as an American relates to your identity as a believer in Jesus?

7. How does the fact that you, as a believer, have received mercy impact how you view your identity?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. What do you think is the appropriate role for patriotism in the lives of believers in Jesus?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. In your own life, how have you experienced Jesus calling you out of darkness and into his wonderful light?

Taking It To Heart

10. What are some practical ways that you can actively defend against the temptation to place your American identity in front of your Christian identity?

11. How can you participate in declaring the praises of God to others in the circle in which you live and interact?



I Need to Be on the Right Side of History

Lesson 13 • December 12 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The Cultural Message

It is important to be on the “right side of history.”

The Biblical Message

Walking with Jesus often puts us on the wrong side of public opinion.

Introduction

Over the past 20 years the phrases “the wrong side of history” and “the right side of history” have been used consistently by politicians, authors, celebrities, and academics. The idea is that history will judge us all one day. Today we judge that slaveholders were on the wrong side of history while abolitionists were on the right side of history. In the same way, we will all be judged one day by those who come long after us. Some of us will be judged to be on the right side of history while others will be judged to be on the wrong side of history.

The desire to be on the right side of history is a powerful motivator. After all, none of us wants to be remembered as a bigot or a fool. We all want to be remembered well. But this deep desire to be on the right side of history can result in us being more concerned with what future generations will say than with what is right and wrong, regardless of what others say.

There was a time when opposing slavery and polygamy and segregation seemed to place a person on the wrong side of history. But those who took these stands were doing what was right, regardless of public opinion. In the same way, the fact that a certain stance is unpopular today (or in the future) does not say anything about whether it is right or wrong.

As Christians, we don’t look to history or public opinion as our judge. We look to the one true God. And the one true God sent his Son to be rejected and put to public shame. In other words, Jesus once appeared to be on the wrong side of history. In this lesson, we look at our calling to fight against the idolatry of public opinion and to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

Getting Started

1. In what situations do you find it hard to deal with the disapproval of other people?
2. If Christians really hold to Jesus’ teachings, in what ways will we be “on the wrong side of history”?

Digging In

Read Hebrews 13:11-14.

11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him

*outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14
For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are
looking for the city that is to come.*

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 verses 11 and 12, the author compares Jesus' suffering to animal sacrifices. What point do you think the author is making by emphasizing the fact that Jesus suffered "outside the city gate"?

5. In what tangible ways might a believer bear the disgrace that Jesus bore (verse 13)?

6. Read John 15:18-25. How do Jesus' words in that passage relate to what the author of Hebrews is saying in verse 13?

7. How does verse 14 address any fears and concerns we might have with "bearing the disgrace [Jesus] bore"?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. How do you think you can tell the difference between properly bearing the reproach of Christ and unnecessarily being antagonistic to unbelievers?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. What impact does it make on you when you think of Jesus not only suffering physical pain in your place, but also suffering public shame in your place?

Taking It To Heart

10. What unpopular biblical teaching is most difficult for you to hold on to in our culture today?

11. In your personal relationship with God, how can you prepare to be able to take unpopular stances for the sake of Jesus?