

MY FAMILY, GOD'S  
**G L O R Y**



# LIFEGROUP **STUDY GUIDE**

January 8 - January 29



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# LIFEGROUP STUDY GUIDE

by Dan Franklin

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:*  
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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.

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# HUSBANDS AND WIVES

## Lesson 1 • January 8

### MAIN POINT

The ultimate purpose of marriage is the glory of God.

### INTRODUCTION

If you're married, then you want to have a great marriage. You want to have a happy, harmonious, meaningful marriage. Some of us might feel pretty good about our marriages, while others of us might really be struggling. What can we do so that more of us experience joy in marriage?

The first and best thing that we can do is to know the purpose of marriage. Otherwise we will end up constantly frustrated, in the same way that we would be constantly frustrated if we were trying to shoot hoops while using a bowling ball.

According to the passage that we'll cover in this lesson, the purpose for marriage is not our personal joy and fulfillment. The purpose of marriage is to show the world a picture of the gospel. The husband is called to reflect the Lord Jesus, who cares for the church. The wife is called to reflect the church who submits to the Lord Jesus.

In this passage are several statements that are offensive to Americans in 2023. Of foremost offense is the call for wives to submit to husbands. Many today try to find a way around this teaching, and many others reject the Bible because of this teaching. Instead of doing either of those, this lesson will invite us all—women and men—to submit to God, and to yield our definition of marriage to his.

When we center our marriages on Jesus, we invite greater joy, greater growth, and greater impact to take place through our marriages.

### GETTING STARTED

1. Use one sentence to summarize what American culture sees as the purpose of marriage.

2. What are some key factors that make it difficult to have a joyful marriage today?

### 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. The call for wives to submit to their husbands has nothing to do with any value difference between men and women. It is a call for wives to willingly place themselves under the leadership of their husbands. With that said, what are some factors that make it challenging for wives to submit to husbands?

5. In verses 22-24 Paul calls wives to submit to their husbands, and then later on in verse 33 he calls wives to respect their husbands. What relationship do you see between these two commands?

6. Focus on verses 25-27, which calls husbands to love their wives. What most stands out to you in how this love is described?

7. What are some of the biggest obstacles to men loving their wives in the way that Paul calls them to in this passage?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. How can husbands and wives live together as equals, while still practicing the leadership of the husband and the submission of the wife?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. Focus on verses 32-33. What do these verses say about the ultimate purpose of marriage—and, by implication, the ultimate purpose for your marriage?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. Think of a current frustration that you have in your marriage. How does it impact your perspective toward this frustration when you start with the idea that the purpose of your marriage is to reflect the gospel of Jesus?

11. If you are married, what is one habit or practice that you and your spouse can put into practice to focus your marriage more fully on Jesus?

# CHILDREN AND PARENTS

## Lesson 2 • January 15

### MAIN POINT

Children and parents both ultimately answer to God, not to one another.

### INTRODUCTION

Parenting provides unique joys and unique challenges. Those of us who are parents would not trade our children for anyone or anything. At the same time, it can be exhausting and heartbreaking to be a parent, and parents can find frequent frustration in attempts to be good parents.

Being a child is also difficult. It's tough to live at what feels like the whims of others, and to have to depend on others for food, for rides, and for permission to do just about everything, and all the while feeling the pressure to be a good kid.

The actions of parents and children are incredibly important to God. But this doesn't mean that we are always in tune with God when we take on specific burdens. Nowhere does God call children to keep themselves under control so that they can prop up the reputation of their parents. Likewise parents are never called to exhaust themselves in order to fill their kids' social calendar or maximize their earning potential.

God has a calling for parents and for children, but we need to be careful not to equate our culture's expectations with the clear teachings of God.

In this lesson we will look at God's commands to children and to parents. One of the key takeaways is that children do not ultimately answer to parents, and parents do not ultimately answer to children. All of us ultimately answer to God. This raises the level of our calling, but it also eases our burdens. Whether we are children or parents, we are all ultimately brothers and sisters, living before God, and looking to fulfill the calling he's given to each of us.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What are some unique challenges that parents face in our culture?

2. What are some factors that make it difficult for kids today to embrace godly instructions and habits?

### DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 6:1-4

**1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." 4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

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 do you think is the connection between the command to obey and the command to honor?

5. Paul commands children to obey their parents because this is “right.” This word refers to actions that are upright and just before God. Why would obedience to children be “right” in this sense?

6. What are some ways that parents can exasperate their children?

7. What are some practical ways for parents to order their home in order to bring children up in “the training and instruction of the Lord”?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. In verses 2-3 we see a promise of blessing and long life for children who obey their parents. But it doesn’t seem that this promise comes to pass in every case. How do you think we can best understand this promise?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. How do the instructions in this passage call both parents and children to place their full trust in God?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. As you take in both the instructions to parents and to children, what is the main action point that you sense God is calling you to take?

11. How does it impact your attitude toward your calling as a parent or a child when you are primarily responsible to God and not to either your parents or your children?

# SANCTITY OF LIFE: CORNERED

January 22

## MAIN POINT

God calls us to preserve the lives of others, even if their death would remove problems from our lives.

## INTRODUCTION

Having a child is a serious disruption in life. There is no doubt about that. Many couples who find themselves with an unplanned pregnancy choose abortion because of the disruption that the child will bring. They want to avoid the disruption to education and career. They fear that they are not prepared to be parents. They are anxious about the financial implications. They don't think that these hardships should be forced upon them, so they choose to end the life of the child.

On the one hand, many of us are horrified at the thought of ending the life of a child. On the other hand, most of us can probably relate to being in a difficult situation and thinking that we should not be forced to deal with it. We feel cornered. We all want to protect our freedom, and so we want options when it comes to the life disruptions that we face.

To abort a baby is to kill a human being created in the image of God. This is a horrible evil. At the same time, simply knowing that abortion is wrong is not always enough to stop us. Most of us are willing to violate our own consciences in order to do something that we think will better our lives.

But what if we truly came to believe that God would provide for us, take care of us, and work all things together for our good no matter what? Would that empower us to make difficult decisions to embrace hardship instead of sinning to avoid it?

In this passage, we see David tempted to solve the problem of a jealous king who wants to kill him. What is remarkable about this story is not just David's actions, but also David's reasons behind the actions that he takes, even while he feels cornered.

## GETTING STARTED

1. A common argument in favor of abortion rights is that women should not be forced to have their lives hijacked by a child. What is your response to this?

2. What are situations in which you are tempted to sin in order to eliminate a problem from your life?

## DIGGING IN

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-7.

**1** After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." **2** So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats.

**3** He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. **4** The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

**5** Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. **6** He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." **7** With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.



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. For background for this story, read 1 Samuel 19:11-16. In light of what you read in that story, why do you think Saul is looking for David at the beginning of chapter 24?

5. When Saul is vulnerable in the cave where David is hiding, how do David's men interpret the situation (verse 4)?

6. How might David's life have improved if he had chosen to kill Saul?

7. According to verses 5-6, what is David's reason for letting Saul (his enemy) go?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. A case can be made that David would have been justified in killing Saul in this story. What are some situations in which killing another person might be acceptable to God?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. David trusted that God would take care of him despite Saul's threats because he trusted in God's goodness and power. What leads you to put your faith in Jesus, despite the dangers and temptations that you sometimes face?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. Name an area of your life in which you need to trust and obey God instead of taking matters into your own hands to try to fix things.

11. Think of the promises God has given in his word. What promise most helps you to be able to trust him with your future?

# GO TEAMS SUNDAY: COMPELLED

January 29

## MAIN POINT

We are compelled to spread the gospel because of the love of Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

If you received a subpoena, you would be compelled to testify in court. This means that it would no longer be up to you whether or not you wanted to do so. The power of the subpoena would force you to do so.

This is the kind of situation we normally think of when we think of being compelled. We think of being forced—perhaps against our will—to do something. It isn't usually a pleasant thought.

But we might also say that we feel compelled to care for our children, to give to the poor, to speak the truth, or to lift our hands in worship to God. Sometimes we feel compelled to do something wonderful.

In the passage that accompanies this lesson, the Apostle Paul talks about feeling compelled by the love of Christ. What does the love of Christ compel him to do? In the context it is clear that the love of Christ compels him to participate in the spread of the gospel of Jesus.

Maybe Paul didn't always feel like doing this. Maybe sometimes he wished that he was not compelled. But he ended up being compelled to do something that is wonderful, God-honoring, and deeply loving to people, and while we are not apostles like Paul, there is a sense in which we are under the same compulsion that Paul was under.

This lesson, which accompanies our GO (Global Outreach) Teams Sunday, will explore what compelled Paul to spread the gospel. It will explore how each of us can respond to the love of Christ and participate in God's great work of spreading the light of Jesus near and far.

## GETTING STARTED

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you feel compelled to spread the gospel? Share your explanation for the number you came up with.

2. When you share the gospel with others, what typically motivates you to do so?

## DIGGING IN

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

**14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.**

**15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.**

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 through verses 16-21. According to what you read in those verses, what do you think Paul feels compelled (verse 14) to do?

5. Why would the belief that one died for all lead us to feel compelled to spread the gospel?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. What do you think it would take for you to feel more compelled by Christ's love to spread the gospel?

6. Focus on verse 15. Why is it good that people would no longer live for themselves?

11. The spread of the gospel is about participating in (1) personal evangelism and (2) the church's collective efforts. In light of this, how is the love of Christ compelling you personally to participate?

7. What do you think it looks like practically for a person to stop living for himself or herself and instead live for Christ?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. When Paul speaks of "Christ's love," do you think he is talking about his love for Christ or Christ's love for him (and others)? Explain how you arrive at your answer.

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. In this passage, Paul says that his motivation for evangelism is not his own benevolent love for humanity, but instead it is the gospel itself that compels him. How can you set up your life so that you are living more constantly in the awareness of the gospel of Jesus?