



# LIFEGROUP **STUDY GUIDE**

September 8 - October 6



[ibf.church](http://ibf.church)



# 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:*  
[www.lbf.church/messages](http://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](mailto:danfranklin@lbfchurch.com)

## **Lesson 1: Our Calling**

Ephesians 4:1 • pp. 4-5 • Sep. 8

## **Lesson 2: Our Posture**

Ephesians 4:2-3 • pp. 6-7 • Sep. 15

## **Lesson 3: Our Unity**

Ephesians 4:4-6 • pp. 8-9 • Sep. 22

## **Lesson 4: Our Gifts**

Ephesians 4:7-10 • pp. 10-11 • Sep. 29

## **Lesson 5: Our Target**

Ephesians 4:11-16 • pp. 12-13 • Oct. 6

# OUR CALLING

## Lesson 1 • September 8

### MAIN POINT

Believers are called to live a life that reflects the gospel.

### INTRODUCTION

Lance Armstrong, a name once synonymous with cycling excellence, rose to global fame as a seven-time Tour de France champion and a symbol of perseverance, having battled and overcome cancer. His story inspired millions, and his Livestrong Foundation raised significant funds for cancer research and support. Armstrong's dedication to the sport and his remarkable comeback were viewed as exemplary, painting him as a hero in the eyes of many. However, beneath this façade of triumph lay a complex narrative of deception and ethical compromise.

Armstrong's choices, particularly his involvement in a sophisticated doping program, ultimately tarnished his legacy. Despite the accolades and the adulation, Armstrong's decision to use performance-enhancing drugs and coerce teammates into similar practices stood in stark contrast to the values of integrity and sportsmanship that his role demanded. The subsequent revelations of his actions led to his disqualification from competitive cycling and the stripping of his titles.

Armstrong clearly was not living a life worthy of the fame and accolades he had received. In contrast to this, we as Christians want to live a life that is a fitting outflow of the gospel we have embraced. In this lesson we will explore our calling to live a life that reflects the gospel. This calling is not the “act” or “persona” we put on, but rather the transformative work of the Holy Spirit that equips us to live a life that honors and points to Christ.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What would be some qualities of a life that people in our culture would consider to be a “worthy” life?

2. Is there someone who has inspired you to want to model them? Why? What aspects of their life captivated you?

### DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:1.

**1 As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.**

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 calls himself “a prisoner of the Lord?”

5. The word translated “urge” here is “parakalo” in the Greek. This word has been translated “urge,” “implore,” “invoke” and “invite.” How does the depth of this word change or enhance your understanding of this verse?

6. As Christians, what is the calling we have received? For help, look up Ephesians 1:18, 2 Timothy 1:9 and 1 Peter 2:9.

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. What is one way this week that you can intentionally lean in to living a life worthy of the calling you have received?

7. Write down three ways Jesus modeled a life that was worthy of its calling.

11. Is there someone (or a group of people—siblings, coworkers, children, etc.) the Holy Spirit is putting on your heart that you need to more consistently model this type of life to? Pray the Holy Spirit would lead you in next steps as you respond to Him.

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. When Paul says to “live a life worthy...” does it mean that an “unworthy” life would point to a lack of salvation? Explain your answer.

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. Just how Lance Armstrong failed, we are incapable of living a life that reflects the gospel without the Holy Spirit living in us. How does this truth both give you freedom and also encourage you to step in to the hope that He gives?

# OUR POSTURE

## Lesson 2 • September 15

### MAIN POINT

Believers in Jesus live for a cause greater than themselves.

### INTRODUCTION

Mother Teresa dedicated her entire life to serving the poorest of the poor. Her journey began in her native Macedonia and took her to Calcutta, India, where she witnessed the dire conditions of those living in poverty. Moved by their suffering, she founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950, an organization committed to caring for "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people who have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone." Her work transcended racial and cultural boundaries, focusing purely on alleviating human suffering and providing dignity to those who were often overlooked and abandoned.

Mother Teresa's choices and way of life were a testament to her unwavering commitment to a cause greater than herself. She lived a life of simplicity and self-sacrifice, often working in the slums, tending to the sick, and comforting the dying. Her actions spoke louder than words, as she not only provided physical care but also offered emotional and spiritual support to those in need. Despite facing criticism and numerous challenges, her faith and dedication never wavered. Mother Teresa's legacy continues to inspire countless individuals and organizations worldwide, demonstrating the profound impact one person can have when they dedicate their life to a cause greater than themselves.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What are some causes our current culture tends to rally behind?

2. The pagan culture of Paul's day did not consider humility to be an admirable quality. In our culture, what are people's attitudes toward humility and gentleness?

### DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:2-3.

**2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

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 word in verse two do you find the most difficult to adhere to? Humble? Gentle? Patient? Bearing? Love? Completely? Explain why you chose the word that you chose.

5. Look up the following verses – how do they change or deepen your understanding of the commands of verse 2?

Philippians 2:7-8

Colossians 3:12-14

James 4:6

6. If you can't achieve unity with others, does this mean you aren't putting in enough effort? Why or why not?

7. What is the significance of the fact that Paul talks not just about unity, but the unity *of the Spirit*?

## WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. Are there any situations in which unity with others is not possible? If so, give an example.

## CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

9. How do we see Jesus model “bearing with one another in love” throughout the gospels? Give specific examples.

## TAKING IT TO HEART

10. In his book *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*, Tim Keller defines humility as follows: “The thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel-humble person is how much they seemed to be totally interested in us. Because the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less.” How can you intentionally think of yourself less this week?

11. Who is a person (or group of people) you can grow in bearing with in love? What are two ways you can be more intentional this week?

# OUR UNITY

## Lesson 3 • September 22

### MAIN POINT

Believers in Jesus have a unity that is grounded in God.

### INTRODUCTION

The human body, with its intricate systems and seamless interconnections, serves as a profound illustration of oneness and unity. Each part, from the smallest cell to the most complex organ, functions harmoniously within a delicate balance. The heart pumps blood, the lungs supply oxygen, the brain coordinates actions, and the muscles enable movement. Despite their diverse roles, each part is indispensable to the whole, demonstrating a remarkable synergy and mutual dependence. This intricate design mirrors the unity and interconnectedness that can be achieved within a church that is grounded in God, where every member, utilizing their unique gifts and roles, works together toward a common purpose.

In a church family, just like in the human body, each individual has a unique function that contributes to the health and growth of the whole. When grounded in God, this unity is strengthened by a shared faith, common values, and mutual support. The church thrives as a unified body, each member uplifting the other, fostering spiritual growth, and spreading love and compassion. In this lesson we'll explore how we can have unity with other believers when we are grounded in God.

### GETTING STARTED

1. Why do you think we are not experiencing more unity in our society today?

2. What are some things that create commonality and promote unity in southern California?

### DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:4-6.

**4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**

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. How do you see the Trinity present in this passage?

5. What significance do you find in that Paul follows up his list of “one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God” with “one body”?



6. What does this passage mean for how we treat believers who have differing views on divisive topics?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. Is there someone you have a hard time accepting as part of our “one body”? Pray for them and for your heart to soften as you recall Romans 5:8.

7. Ephesians 1:22-23 says that Christ is the head of the body. What significance does this have to the unity of the church?

11. How can you tangibly foster more unity within Life Bible Fellowship Church? Brainstorm three ideas you can put into practice – one this week, one this month, and one this year.

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. We often think of Christians having different gifts and different callings. In verse 4 Paul speaks of “one calling.” What do you think this one calling is?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. The gospel of Jesus is about grace, not about us getting what we deserve. Read Romans 5:8, and write about how this gospel truth can help you lean into Paul’s call to unity.

# OUR GIFTS

## Lesson 4 • September 29

### MAIN POINT

Jesus has given spiritual gifts to every believer.

### INTRODUCTION

Growing up, I spent countless hours in my dad's garage, mesmerized by his ability to repair anything and everything with the tools at his disposal. The garage was a haven of activity, filled with shelves lined with wrenches, screwdrivers, hammers, and specialized gadgets, each meticulously organized. My dad had a unique knack for knowing exactly which tool to use for each job, whether it was fixing a broken bicycle chain, repairing a leaky faucet, or building a new piece of furniture. Each tool had a specific purpose, and I quickly learned that even the smallest, seemingly insignificant tool played a crucial role in the success of his projects. The efficiency and precision with which my dad worked underscored the importance of every tool in his collection; none were redundant, and all were needed to complete the varied tasks at hand.

In much the same way, Jesus has given spiritual gifts to every believer, each one uniquely crafted for a specific purpose. Just as my dad's tools were indispensable for his repairs, these spiritual gifts are essential for building and nurturing the body of Christ. No gift is too small or insignificant; each one is vital to the health and growth of the Church. Whether it's teaching, serving, encouraging, or giving, every believer's gift contributes to the overall mission of spreading God's love and truth. Just as a well-equipped garage enables a craftsman to tackle any repair, the diverse spiritual gifts bestowed upon believers equip the Church to fulfill its divine purpose with unity and effectiveness.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What's the best gift you've ever received or given?

2. What are some gifts/abilities you wish you had (not just spiritual gifts)?

### DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:7-10.

**7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says:**

**“When he ascended on high  
he took many captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”**

**9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)**

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 passage right before this one (verses 4-6) was all about unity. How do you think the unity of the previous passage relates to the differing gifts in this passage?

5. The emphasis on the Greek term used here for “gift” focuses on the freeness of the gift. How does this shape your understanding of which people get certain types of gifts?

9. In Paul’s day, a King who conquered a rival nation would return and distribute the plunder amongst his people. In Christ’s ascension (victory over sin and death after His crucifixion), He similarly was able to distribute spiritual gifts to His people. How does it impact your attitude toward spiritual gifts when you think of their connection to Christ’s victory?

6. Verse 8 is a quote from the first half of Psalm 68:18. Look up the verse and read this verse in its entirety. How does the second half of this verse deepen and refine your understanding of Ephesians 4:7?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

10. What do you believe your spiritual gifts are? If you don’t know your gifts, pray that Christ will reveal them to you in practical ways.

7. Does Christ apportioning grace mean some believers get more or less of His grace? Explain your answer.

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

11. List three new ways you can serve the church (that is, Christians) through your gifts.

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. If Christ freely gives gifts to all believers by grace, what does that mean about our need (or lack of need) to practice and develop these gifts?

# OUR TARGET

## Lesson 5 • October 6

### MAIN POINT

Jesus' purpose for the church is to build itself up into maturity.

### INTRODUCTION

When I first arrived in high school, I was overwhelmed and uncertain about my future. I felt lost in the sea of new faces and daunting academic and extracurricular expectations. However, everything changed when I met Coach Brian, a tough, but intentional mentor who saw potential in me that I couldn't yet see in myself. He took me under his wing, providing guidance not just in soccer but also in navigating the complexities of high school life. His consistent support and wisdom helped me build confidence and develop a sense of direction. Through his mentorship, I learned the value of perseverance, teamwork, and the importance of community.

By the time I reached my senior year, I had grown immensely, both athletically and personally. I no longer felt like the uncertain freshman who had stepped onto campus four years earlier. Inspired by Coach Brian's example, I began mentoring other student athletes, sharing the lessons and experiences that had shaped my journey. Helping them find their footing and witnessing their growth. This journey of mine is just a glimpse into the transformative power of Christ and His ability to grow and mature us into a connected body of believers. Just as I was mentored and developed into a mature athlete, we as a church develop and mentor one another, through the power of the Holy Spirit, towards spiritual maturity. In this lesson we'll dive into Jesus' purpose for the church and what our target should be as a church body.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What are some traits you would say define a "mature" individual?

2. Share an example of one of the first times you remember making a really mature decision.

### DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:11-16.

**11** So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of fullness of Christ.

**14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

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 original Greek in verse 12 translated here “to equip” is derived from a root which signifies to “mend” (Matthew 4:21) what is broken or to “complete” (Luke 6:40, Romans 9:22—figurative examples) what is unfinished. How does this fuller definition deepen your understanding of how we attain our target?

5. Paul gives us three objectives—or targets—we are to aim at. Look closely at verses 13, 15 and 16 and list the three targets.

6. What is the key to hitting the targets listed in verses 15 and 16? What words are repeated?

7. Notice the contrast Paul gives in verses 14 and 15. What would be some indicators of a mature congregation versus an immature congregation?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. This passage says that the church was given people (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) to equip us. To what degree should we view those roles as special, and to what degree should we view them the same as any other member of the church?

9. In verse 13, Paul writes about becoming mature. What is his measure of maturity, and how does this measure relate to the gospel message?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

10. What is one way you think you can grow in your maturity? (Consider if there is somebody you can connect with to walk with you on that journey.)

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

11. What is one way you can fill the roles of verse 11 and help spur on growth and maturity to those around you?