



LIFEGROUP **STUDY GUIDE**

October 13 - November 24



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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:*
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.

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NEW SELF

Lesson 1 • October 13

MAIN POINT

Our new life in Christ is both a reality and a pursuit.

INTRODUCTION

The Lion King is one of the most beloved and successful animated films of all time, captivating audiences with its rich storytelling, memorable characters, and powerful themes. At its core, the movie tells the story of Simba, a young lion who goes through a profound transformation as he journeys from a carefree cub to a king who embraces his true identity. His story resonates with viewers because it mirrors the universal struggle of facing one's past, overcoming fear, and stepping into a new role with courage and responsibility. Simba's transformation is not just about reclaiming his throne, but about discovering who he is meant to be and fulfilling his destiny.

Similarly, Christians experience a transformation in their lives when they come to faith in Christ. Just as Simba had to confront his past, leave behind his old ways, and embrace his identity as the rightful king, believers are called to shed their old selves and embrace their new identity in Christ. This transformation is central to the Christian faith, symbolizing the journey from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and from fear to freedom. In this lesson, we will explore what it means to have a new life in Christ and the profound change that takes place when we truly accept our identity in Him.

GETTING STARTED

1. What is something you really enjoyed as a child? A hobby, or show, etc.

2. Can you think of something you did regularly in the past that you couldn't imagine doing now?

DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:17-24

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. **18** They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. **19** Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned **21** when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. **22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

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 17-19 Paul identifies four characteristics of the ungodly (Gentiles) – what are they?

5. In verses 22-24 Paul gives us three objectives to adhere to in this new way of life – what are they?

6. Notice the contrasting descriptions of verse 19 and verse 24 – Does Paul use language that points to a subtle or drastic transformation? Explain your answer.

7. According to verse 21, what is the key to beginning this transformation of a new life?

WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. This passage says the new way of life is learned (verse 20). Does this mean that our new identity in Christ comes about gradually as a result of you learning more? Explain your answer.

CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

9. Paul presents our new life both as a reality and as a pursuit. How does it impact your pursuit of “true righteousness and holiness” (verse 24) when you read that your new self was “created to be like God”?

TAKING IT TO HEART

10. Is there an area of your life that more closely aligns with your old self than your new self? In what practical ways is God calling you to put off the old self and put on the new self?

11. Paul reminds the church of Ephesus what they had learned. Take time to pray about who you can be a teacher to. Who can you tell about Christ and teach in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus (verse 21)?

NEW PRACTICES

Lesson 2 • October 20

MAIN POINT

Our habits flow out of our new life in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Corrie Ten Boom, after surviving the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp, encountered one of the guards responsible for her suffering. In that moment, faced with the opportunity to harbor anger or extend forgiveness, Corrie chose to forgive him. Her ability to extend grace, even in the most unimaginable circumstances, reflects the heart of Ephesians 4:32, which calls us to “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Corrie’s story shows that forming Christ-like habits of forgiveness and love isn’t easy, but it is possible through the transforming power of God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s leading in our lives. As followers of Christ, we are called to live lives that reflect his character, shaping our words and actions according to his love and truth. Ephesians 4:25-5:2 challenges us to put away falsehood, anger, bitterness, and malice, and instead embrace kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Paul exhorts us to “be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” Forming new habits that align with this teaching requires a heart transformed by grace, one that is patient, forgiving, and focused on loving others.

GETTING STARTED

1. Share of a time when you tried to start or stop a habit? How did it go?

2. Have you ever formed a new habit, good or bad, largely because of the people you spent time with?

DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 4:25-5:2

4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **26** “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** and do not give the devil a foothold. **28** Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5:1 Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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. Paul gives us fourteen commands in this brief passage. Eight are in the negative form (do not, get rid, no longer, etc.) and six are in the positive form. List the positive and negative commands side by side and compare them. What do you notice?

5. Of the positive commands, which is the most difficult for you to follow? Why?

6. Of the negative commands, which is the most difficult for you to follow? Why?

7. Our “how” is given in chapter 5 verses 1 and 2. How do these verses compare to what we typically see played out on social media, or news outlets, when there is disagreement or dissent between two groups?

WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. Verse 30 says “do not grieve the Spirit.” What does this mean? Can we make the Holy Spirit sad? Explain your answer.

CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

9. Bitterness, anger, rage, slander and malice can all be weighty habits to tackle; often deeply-rooted with years, if not decades, of habitual practice. Read John 16:33. When victory over these sins seems far off, what can you take from this passage?

TAKING IT TO HEART

10. Verse 32 states that in Christ, God forgave us. That is, because of what Christ did, God forgave us. Spend a moment to reflect on the wrongs Christ covered up for you in comparison to the wrongs others may have done against you. Pray for the Spirit to lead you towards forgiveness and reconciliation to anyone you may have anger or bitterness towards. After doing this, what do you notice about your attitude toward those who wrong you?

11. Of the commands you identified as being difficult to follow in questions 4 and 5, what is one action you can take to intentionally lean into the Spirit’s leading this week?

NEW WORDS

Lesson 3 • October 27

MAIN POINT

Our new life in Christ is displayed through how we speak.

INTRODUCTION

We have all heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Yet, we know that this is far from the truth. Words have incredible power—they can wound deeply or bring great healing. Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits." The words we use can either bring death or life to any situation. Consider Shakespeare's Othello, where a single word—"honest"—planted with malice by Iago, ignites a chain of jealousy and destruction in Othello's heart, ultimately leading to tragic ruin. This story highlights how one word, spoken with harmful intent, can unravel relationships and cause irreversible damage.

In Ephesians 5:3-7, Paul calls us to live in a manner worthy of Christ, not only in our actions but also in our words, avoiding anything that leads to moral decay. As we study this passage, we are challenged to reflect on whether our words and actions bring life or death, and whether they align with the purity and thankfulness God desires from us.

GETTING STARTED

1. Share of a time when you spoke or received words that brought great joy or sorrow.

2. Do you find it more difficult to act with kindness or to speak with kindness? Explain your answer.

DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 5:3-7

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with 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. In this passage Paul warns us about several things we should avoid. What is the one thing he says we should do?

5. Read Luke 6:43-45. How do those words of Jesus relate to what Paul says in Ephesians 5:3-7?

6. In verse 3, Paul seems to put a heightened emphasis on sin that should not be, in any way, associated with Christians. Why do you think Paul uses such strong language here?

7. If a Christian is to not have a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity or greed, what do you think this means for the entertainment (songs, movies, tv shows, books) that we consume?

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. Read Ephesians 2:13. How does this verse lead you in how to respond when you fail to live up to Paul’s commands in 5:3-7?

TAKING IT TO HEART

10. How can you effectively bring loving rebuke and correction when other believers are participating in obscenity, foolish talk, and coarse joking?

11. In which of the areas covered in this passage do you think you have the most room for growth? Pray for the Holy Spirit’s leading to help spur you on towards a deeper closeness with God.

WHY WE PRAY

November 3

MAIN POINT

For Christians, prayer is a lifestyle, not a hobby.

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians believe (1) that prayer is incredibly important and also (2) that they themselves don't pray nearly as much as they should. While we constantly affirm the importance of prayer, most of us struggle to live in light of this belief. We get distracted, we get bored, we get discouraged, and we often give up. In fact, some of you who are reading this feel that you have fallen off in your prayer life from where you once were.

In this lesson we will explore one simple verse about devoting ourselves to prayer. The hope for this lesson is that it won't simply teach us something new about prayer, but that it will inspire and facilitate new steps that will lead us to consistent and joyful prayer.

GETTING STARTED

1. In what situations do you feel driven to pray?

2. For you personally, what are some of the joyful elements of prayer, and what are some of the most challenging elements?

DIGGING IN

Read Colossians 4:2.

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

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 strikes you about the word "devote" as it relates to how we approach prayer?

5. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul says to "pray continually." How do you think that command relates to his command in Colossians 4:2?

6. How do you think watchfulness relates to prayer?

7. How does a thankful attitude impact not only parts of prayer that are focused on gratitude, but also on all other elements of prayer (requests, confession, praise)?

TAKING IT TO HEART

11. What do you believe God is calling you to do in order to devote yourself more fully to prayer?

WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. What do you think are the different benefits of (1) praying spontaneously throughout the day and (2) setting aside specific time for focused prayer?

9. Romans 5:1-2 says that we now have access to God, since we have been “justified through faith . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ.” How does it impact your attitude to prayer, knowing that your access to God is possible only through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross?

CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

10. What truth do you think is most important for you to keep in mind in order to help you approach God in prayer with joy and consistency?

WHY WE SERVE

November 10

MAIN POINT

In the church, serving is not seen as a punishment but as a privilege.

INTRODUCTION

Years ago Tim Tebow, a well-known Christian athlete, was asked about what sort of woman he would want to marry. He listed off several wonderful character qualities that he would value in a wife. One of the qualities he listed was “a servant.” He wanted a wife who was a servant. Many bristled at this statement. They were put off by the idea that, in their understanding, he wanted to find a woman who would serve him. It sounded demeaning and egotistical, not to mention chauvinistic. After all, who would want to be a servant?

What many of those who responded failed to understand is that as Christians we have a different attitude toward servanthood than they have. For us, it is not an insult to call someone a servant. It is a compliment. And it is not a punishment to be called to serve. It is a privilege.

In the passage that accompanies this lesson, the Apostle Paul speaks about qualifications for deacons. The literal meaning of the word “deacon” is “servant.” Deacons are those who serve the church by helping to meet practical needs. In this lesson we will explore the calling of deacons, and we will also explore why it is that a church role that is centered on serving is not a calling to receive reluctantly, but a privilege to receive joyfully.

GETTING STARTED

1. What experience—if any—have you had with deacons in different churches that you have attended?

2. In our culture, how does the idea of serving connect to a person’s status?

DIGGING IN

Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. **9** They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

11 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. **13**

Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ 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.

4. Deacons seem to be Christians who served the practical needs of the church. With this in mind, why do you think Paul lays out such lofty qualifications for those who would serve in this role?

5. In verse 9 Paul speaks of the need for deacons to “keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.” How is it different to serve others in response to the gospel as opposed to serving others for purely humanitarian reasons?

6. As he does with elders, Paul requires that deacons be tested before they serve in their role. Since no Christian ever arrives at perfection, what do you think would have to be true of a person for them to have proven themselves worthy of church leadership?

7. In verse 13 Paul speaks of the standing of those who serve well. How is this vision of servants different than the world’s vision of servants?

WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. Verse 11 speaks of “the women,” which may refer to female deacons or to the wives of deacons. Based on the context of this passage, and on the overall context of this letter, which interpretation do you think is more likely?

9. In Matthew 20:28 Jesus said, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” In what ways have you experienced Jesus serving you?

CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

10. What do you think would be the impact at LBF Church if everyone saw being a servant as a calling and a privilege instead of seeing it as an undesirable role?

TAKING IT TO HEART

11. In what specific ways do you feel God calling you to be more servant-hearted toward those around you?

NEW LIGHT

Lesson 4 • November 17

MAIN POINT

New life in Christ leads us to reject darkness and embrace light.

INTRODUCTION

In *The Matrix*, the protagonist Neo, initially trapped in a false reality, is "awakened" when he is shown the truth behind the simulated world he lives in. His eyes are opened to the fact that everything he thought he knew about reality was wrong. And now he must decide what to do with the new reality to which he has been introduced. The choice is not easy because reality turns out to be tough to live with. In fact, one character in the movie chooses to return to ignorance rather than accept reality as it is. Neo's journey represents a dramatic shift from ignorance to understanding, from darkness to light. He must then choose to live in this new reality, shedding his former ways.

Similarly, when we come to faith in Christ, we awaken to a new reality—one where truth, righteousness, and goodness are clearly seen. In Ephesians 5:8-14, Paul urges believers to live as "children of light," leaving behind the darkness of their past and embracing the truth and goodness that come from walking with Christ. Just as light reveals what was once hidden, our new identity in Christ brings greater understanding and purpose.

But the question remains: Will we choose to live in the light or will we return to the darkness? In this lesson we will explore why and how we must choose to walk in the new light that Jesus has brought us into.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have you ever been somewhere totally pitch black? Where was it, and what was it like?

2. Darkness is often used as a negative image in the Bible. What do you think is so bad about the dark?

DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 5:8-14

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14

This is why it is said:

**"Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."**

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 verse 9, what consists of living as children of light?

5. How can a person “find out what pleases the Lord” (verse 10)?

6. Paul doesn’t tell us to just avoid darkness, but rather to use our light to expose it. What do you think he means by this?

7. What do you think is the significance of Paul using strong words like “all” (verse 9), “nothing” (verse 10), and “everything” (verse 13)?

WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. When light enters a space, it immediately ends the darkness. How can you bring light into dark situations?

CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

9. In Matthew 5:14 Jesus says that his followers are the light of the world. In John 8:12 Jesus says that he is the light of the world. How do you think Jesus’ light relates to the light that believers have?

TAKING IT TO HEART

10. How can you shine the light of Christ more brightly in the following contexts?

At Home

At Work/School

In Social Situations

11. Is there an area of your life that is still in darkness? Who can you bring into that darkness in the hopes of bringing it to light? Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring you the courage to step out in faith and step into the light.

NEW WISDOM

Lesson 5 • November 24

MAIN POINT

New life in Christ leads us to embrace the wisdom of God's will for our lives.

INTRODUCTION

In Ephesians 5:15-21, Paul calls believers to live with wisdom and purpose, making the most of every opportunity because the days are filled with challenges. This reminds us of Yoda from Star Wars, a figure known for his wisdom, patience, and discernment. Yoda teaches young Jedi to be mindful, disciplined, and intentional in their actions—just as Paul urges believers to walk carefully and avoid the foolishness of the world. Like Yoda guiding Luke Skywalker toward maturity and self-control, Paul calls us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, so that our lives reflect wisdom and purpose in every decision we make.

Paul contrasts a life led by recklessness and indulgence with one that is grounded in the Spirit, where worship, gratitude, and mutual submission are the defining marks of a believer's life. He encourages us to live thoughtfully, always seeking to understand the will of the Lord and aligning our actions with His guidance. When we live in the Spirit, we are empowered to walk wisely, using our time and opportunities to reflect Christ's love in all that we do, much like the Jedi, who are taught to harness the Force for good and remain focused on their greater purpose.

GETTING STARTED

1. Who would you consider to be the wisest person in your life? What are some of their characteristics?

2. Who does our current culture view as wise?

DIGGING IN

Read Ephesians 5:15-21

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. **18** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, **19** speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, **20** always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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 significance do you take from Paul saying that we must "be very careful" if we are going to live wise lives?

5. Focus on verses 15-17. What clues does Paul give about what a wise life looks like?

6. In verse 18, why do you think Paul contrasts being filled with Spirit with being drunk on wine?

CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL

9. If we are not careful to live wise lives, how could worldly “wisdom” undermine our ability to live in the beauty and simplicity of the gospel of Jesus?

7. In verses 19-21 what marks does Paul list to describe a Spirit-filled life?

TAKING IT TO HEART

10. Paul urges believers to “make the most of every opportunity” as a mark of godly wisdom. What are some practical ways we can seize opportunities to live out our faith, especially in challenging circumstances?

WRESTLING WITH ISSUES

8. How do you think Paul’s words “submit to one another” play out in terms of ideas about authority and individual freedom?

11. In what areas of your life do you feel the need to be more intentional about embracing God’s wisdom over the world’s wisdom? How can you invite the Holy Spirit to guide you in those specific areas?