

Life Group Questions

Better Together: We Are Not a Crowd; We Are Family

Given and Giving Grace / Pastor Brody Loewen / Ephesians 4:25-32 / Feb. 5/6, 2022

To the Life Group leader: thank you for your ministry leading this Life Group. **Take time to review the questions selecting those that you believe will be most helpful for your group study.** You will not have time to use all the questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you lead, as you select questions, and as you guide the discussion. As a team, we're praying for the Holy Spirit to guide you, lead you and speak through you.

We've been given grace immeasurable in Christ's death on the cross. Such a costly sacrifice brought us from death to life, not because of anything we did. Likewise, others are either spiritually dead or brought to life in the same way. This puts us on the same level because we contributed nothing to our salvation except the sin that killed us and made salvation necessary. Isn't that humbling? Wouldn't that change how we treat each other? This week Brody speaks on the grace we give on account of the grace we have received.

Reconnect

Come together with these preliminary questions:

- When we say that we consider everyone equals, what are we equal in? How ought everyone be treated based on your definition of "equal"?
- Do you see any inequality going on around you or in the world?
- Do you find it easy to forgive? Why or why not? Think of specific times you forgave or struggled to forgive.

Open in Prayer

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the text, the questions, and each other.

Message Recap

Review the message using these questions

1. What stood out to you most in this week's message?
2. What was the most meaningful thing you heard in the message? Why?
3. What questions are still lingering?

Choose discussion and application questions

1) **We have received unmerited favour**

Pastor Brody says, "A definition of grace will help us today. Grace is unmerited favor. Reverend Joseph A. Komonchak defines grace as 'generous, free and totally unexpected and undeserved.' It is receiving something good that we do not deserve by any means. An unexpected gift."

- a) Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What stopped you while reading this passage?

- (1) What questions arise from this passage?
 - (2) What part of this passage cuts to the heart? In other words, what part impacted you the most?
 - (3) Using this passage as a foundation, how do you avoid the dangers of earning God's favour by good actions or rejecting obedience altogether? What part does obedience/good deeds play in your faith?
- b) How would you define "dead in our trespasses"?
- (1) Based on your definition of dead, what does Paul mean when he says Christ "made us alive"?
 - (2) Turn to Ephesians 4:22-24. It says, "created after the likeness of God." What does it look like for you to model some of God's characteristics? Pick out some of the following that jump out for you in your life: Creative, Holy, Wise, Truthful, Loving, Good, Faithful, Mercy, Kindness, Patience, Justice, Righteousness, Wrath, Jealousy, Grace.

2) Grace changes how we see and treat our brothers and sisters

Brody says, "When we hide ourselves to look better than we are, we dismiss the gospel's total transformation in our lives. We can live in truth because we have the assurance of God's love, proven through Jesus, so there is nothing to fear. And as the people of God, we get to share that love and throw off our own pride and lies and enter into real, humble, deep relationships with each other."

- a) Ephesians 2:1-10 so clearly summarizes God's grace to us to the point where this passage has been called a gospel summary without the cross. Reflecting on verses 3, 8-9, how does this passage affect how Christians see each other and non-believers?
- (1) Does this make it easier or harder to love? How so?
 - (2) Is there anyone you're really angry at right now, not just around you but also politicians, activists, etc.? Who and why?
 - (3) Does this passage allow you to have more grace for them? Why?
 - (4) This is often the most difficult question, but we ought to ask: How can you love people you are angry with or strongly disagree with? Be specific.
- b) Are you part of a discipleship relationship or group where you can be fully vulnerable? If you're not, why not?
- (1) What benefits could there be in building a relationship or joining a group like that?
 - (2) Do you agree with Brody's statement that "We can only grow together when we are willing to let others see us the way we are"? Why or why not?
 - (3) Does our current social isolation hinder our ability to be vulnerable? How?

3) A life of grace is a reflection of God Himself

- a) Read 4:25-32. Stop at each verse to answer the following questions.
- (1) (v.25) What could have been the falsehoods that Paul was referring to? What is the reason that Paul gives for being truthful? Is truth-telling a value in your spiritual family or your biological family?
 - (2) (v.26) What should you rightfully be angry about? Does that anger you, and why?
 - (3) (v.27) How can lingering anger be an "opportunity [for] the devil"?
 - (4) (v.28) How do you see this verse lived out in your life, your family, or the church? Why did Paul say this to the Ephesians?
 - (5) (v.29) Is this any different than "don't say any inappropriate things"? How is it different, or not?
 - (6) (v.30) What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? How do you grieve Him?
 - (7) (v.31) How can we practically "put away" "bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander ... along with all malice"?
 - (8) (v.32) How can you live this verse out in your life group? Church? Community? Country? World?

Group Action

This sermon series is about spiritual family. What steps will you take to deepen the family connection?

The Life Group questions for January 8th and 9th included a call to action in your Life Group to deepen fellowship. If you haven't gone over that with your group, we ask you to do that this week. If you did, perhaps take some time to remind the group of the action steps you committed to. Here are the group action questions from last week:

- (1) Do you feel a need for a spiritual family?
- (2) Has this need ever been fulfilled? Share times when you felt fulfilled in fellowship with other Christians.
- (3) Is that need regularly fulfilled in your church or life group? Don't be afraid to say no, but try to explain or share what barriers stand in the way.
- (4) Do you want to experience deeper fellowship with your church and life group? What steps could you take?

If your group would like to, list ways your group could deepen fellowship with one another and/or the larger church. Choose one or two to start with, and then pledge to put that into action. In the following weeks, remember to remind each other of the change you wanted to see in moving deeper in fellowship.

Here are some examples of things you could do: 1) Have one person share their testimony at each group meeting. Give everyone an opportunity to ask questions and pray for that person. 2) Eat together. 3) Go out and do something fun together (hiking, walking, laser tag, visiting a museum, etc.) 4) Serve together. 5) Help each other with any projects they have. 6) Set up a regular prayer meeting. 7) Put into practice a regular spiritual discipline together and hold one another accountable. 8) Have a split group time, split between men and women, and have room for conversation. 9) Talk to someone (pastor, elder, other group leaders) about other ways you could deepen your group's fellowship and sense of family.

Reflection questions:

- What amount of grace should you show others based on how much grace you've been given? What does that practically look like for you?
- How can you love your enemies? Think of specifics.
- Is unity in the spiritual family desirable? Why?

Choose Your Next Step

What next step will you commit to for the upcoming week (and beyond)?

Individual

- Do you have behaviors or attitudes that are stopping you from following Jesus into "danger?" If yes, confess those to God.
- If you are unsure if you have any areas of your life that are not submitted to Jesus, ask the Holy Spirit to show them to you.
- Ask Jesus to forgive you for not trusting him in the "danger."
- Commit each area of your life that you have held back from Jesus to him. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit to walk in trust of Jesus rule every day.

Christian Community

- Tell a trusted friend where you sense God calling you to step into "danger" and ask them to pray for you as you seek to trust and follow God in these areas.

- Reach out to your Christian community to talk through the things that pull you away from God and his ways. Ask for the group to pray for you and tell them how they can support you in your walk with Jesus.

□ **The world**

- Ask God to guide you as you bring his kingdom through your longings and love wherever you go.
- Ask God for discernment to see where this earthly kingdom is in conflict with God's kingdom and how you can live out God's priorities in your world.

Closing Prayer

A closing prayer is an effective way to point people back to our Loving Father as they seek to apply their new learnings throughout the week. If we remain connected to the power of the Holy Spirit, He will remind us of His call for us and give us the strength to follow through. Ask group members to share what they sense God calling them to. Pray for each other and commit to continue to do so during the week as people step out in obedience to God's leading.