



Life Groups 2018

NLC Life Group Through the Bible Study

Week of September 16, 2018

Sermon: Church Signs |

Don't Make Me Come Down There!

Life Group Schedule

15 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **WORD LINK**. Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person starts with any word they choose (ex: “red”). The next person repeats the first word and adds another word which links to the first (ex: “red tomato”). The next person repeats the previous words and adds another word link (ex: “red tomato soup”), and so on. To keep this moving, only allow five seconds for each word link.

NOTE: Use the study however it flows most naturally for your group. If you lead a small group, you may want to stay together and go straight through the study. If your group is larger, you may want a leader to take the group through the main points, then save the questions for small group breakouts. How you use the study is always up to your discretion as a leader.

CHALLENGE: Leaders, it’s important when you’re walking through the following content and asking your group members to share, that you also are willing and able to share from your own experiences. Your authenticity will bring a level of safety and trust that your members may have never experienced before.

OPENING PRAYER

45–60 MIN Church Signs I Don’t Make Me Come Down There!—God

TALK IT OUT

- Common belief: God is just waiting to come down and punish us.
- As much as we have tried to unlearn this, it is often a filter for the way we see God, pray, live, and make decisions.
 - › Sometimes we come to church because we don’t want God to come down here, not out of our love for Him.
 - › Sometimes we pray for the same reason, forgetting that prayer is spending time with our Creator.
 - › Sometimes we make the “right” decisions because we don’t want to get in trouble, and our heart isn’t in it.
- **DISCLAIMER:** We should have a healthy “fear” of God. We should long to be at peace with Him. We should want to spend eternity in Heaven. When we are separated from God we should feel “lost,” because we are nothing without His grace, but some of us have a view of God that is way too angry.

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.—AW Tozer

Q1. Have you ever been caught? Busted?

- John 8 describes a woman who got caught.

READ JOHN 8:1-11 (NLT)

- The only people Jesus was a little harsh with were the Pharisees who adhered to the rules and regulations of the OT law. They were self-righteous, proud, hypocritical, and legalistic.
- The law of Moses says you stone *both* guilty parties.
 - › They didn't care about the woman. They were using the woman to trap Jesus.
 - › If he says, "Yes, stone her," then his reputation for grace is destroyed.
 - › If he says, "Let her go," it would seem as if Jesus is condoning adultery.
 - › She is completely embarrassed and shamed. She was caught.
 - › The way Jesus responds can teach us about God's heart.

1. Jesus Wants Religion Away From Your Life.

RELIGION IS...	CHRISTIANITY IS...
...man's attempt to reach God.	...God's attempt to reach man.
...motivated by fear.	...motivated by love.
...focused on what you do.	...focused on what Jesus did.

- Jesus and the religious people had the same goal in mind: They both wanted her to sin no more.
 - › The Pharisees' plan was to kill her; Jesus' plan was to forgive her.
- Be careful not to adopt this same religious attitude.
- Sometimes as Christians get good at being good and we think everyone should be good like we are good. In reality the Bible says that **NO ONE IS GOOD!**

ROMANS 3:23 (NIV) "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

- Any good that comes out of us is from God and from His grace.

HOW YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE BEING RELIGIOUS:

- When you judge people who sin differently than you.
- When you try to fix people.
- When you focus on what you know instead of how you live.
- When you focus on the outside instead of the inside.

- When you measure your worth by your works.
- When you value rules over relationship.

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (NIV) “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

JESUS WANTS RELIGION AWAY FROM YOUR LIFE.

2. Jesus Wants Grace In The Middle Of Your Life

- Jesus will remove everything to get into the middle of your life.
 - › Jesus gets the religious people away so he can forgive her.
 - › Jesus tells an adulterer that he does not condemn her.
- Some are stiff-arming a God that does not exist, picturing a God who is ready to slam you for your failures, waiting for you to come clean so He can put you in your place.
 - › There are consequences for rebellion and sin, but God is always looking at us through the eyes of grace. When we are caught, we are caught in grace. He longs to forgive and restore his people!

EPHESIANS 2:8-10 (NLT) “God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”

- God does not give us what we deserve. It’s called grace.
- This passage of Scripture is in the Bible so that we can understand who God is and his heart for us when we are caught. If you don’t get grace you won’t fully get God. But if grace is in the middle of your life, things will start making sense.
 - › Our understanding of grace empowers works.
 - › Our comprehension of grace enables us to live for God.
 - › A revelation of grace helps us give it to others.

3. Jesus Wants Sin To Leave Your Life.

- Why? Because sin will destroy you. Sin has real-life consequences, but Jesus offers freedom from sin. (verse 11: “Go and sin no more.”)

*Sin will take you further than you want to go,
keep you longer than you want to stay,
and cost you more than you want to pay.*

- Jesus was full of grace AND truth. We must have grace AND truth.

- › We have to make sure our GRACE is as loud as our TRUTH.

ROMANS 6:6-11 (NLT) “We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.”

- The woman caught in adultery thought she would receive death but was caught so she would receive grace. She was caught in the grace of God.
- This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We were born into sin and deserved death, but because of Jesus we can receive eternal life.

ROMANS 5:8 (NIV) “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- Q2.** Where in your life do you currently need to receive God’s grace? Be honest!
- Q3.** In what area or areas of your life do you need to extend God’s grace to others?
- Q4.** What is the next step you need to take this week?

TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAY OVER NEEDS

ANNOUNCEMENTS