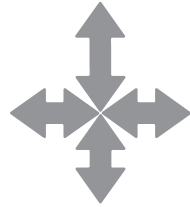




GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of October 21st

This study is designed to help your community group grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are three dimensions to following Jesus.



UP: growing in relationship with God

IN: growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

OUT: growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission

Get Started:

Have you ever received words of affirmation or encouragement which positively affected the course of your life? What were you told and how did those words affect you?



UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word

Read aloud the passages for the week: Exodus 20:16 and Ephesians 4:29–32. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. Sometimes we are inclined to think about this command as relating to perjury, but it is more than that. This command has more to do with using words to destroy those around us, particularly if we have the upper hand in power or authority. Where in our society have you seen words destroy people? What does Paul say about how we are to use our words?
2. Once again, this command is part of God's instruction to Israel in which He is teaching them how to live life in the way it is meant to be lived. How does obeying this command lead to a fuller life?
3. How would you define "gossip?" What are the effects of gossip? Is gossip okay if the person being talked about doesn't find out? Why or why not?
4. This command does not only refer to telling untruths about people, but also speaks to the way in which we utilize the truth. Reformer John Calvin observed, "We delight in a certain poisoned sweetness experienced in ferreting out and in disclosing the evils of others..."¹ What kinds of experiences have you had with this "poisoned sweetness?"
5. When others tell half-truths about someone, twist someone's words or re-tell a story in a way that makes them look like a hero and everyone else like a dummy, how does it influence your perspective of them? Have you ever done these things? Why?

¹John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* vol. 2, trans. McNeill John T., (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 412.

²Kevin DeYoung, *The Good News We Almost Forgot* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 205.

6. Many situations tempt us to lie, gossip, twist words or mislead, but Jesus is the Lord of our voice. Our words should bless and build up others, they should be used to encourage and to speak truth. What are some tangible ways you could practice these things in the coming week?



Out: : Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)

Is there someone in your life who could use some words of encouragement? What could you say to encourage them this week?



IN: Connect with Each Other

We only have one more week left in this series. Use these questions as a guide as you begin evaluating your time together.

Leaders please jot down some notes and share them with your coach or email them to kfowler@first-pres.org so we can hear some of these stories.

1. How has this group been meaningful for you over the last few months?
2. How has this group helped you grow as a disciple throughout these last few months?
3. Would it be valuable for the group to keep meeting?

If "yes," will you continue? Do you need to adapt your time/frequency/meeting place/etc? Do you need to take some time off? If "no," why not? What could have made this a more meaningful experience?

4. Do you have any feedback on the discussion questions?