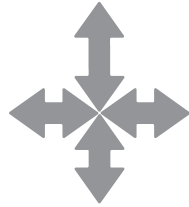




GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of September 9th

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:

If your group is meeting for the first time, take time to introduce yourselves around the circle. What is your name, etc. What are you hoping to get out of these coming weeks?

If you had a day entirely to yourself. No responsibilities for a full 24 hours. What would you do with your time?



UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word

Read aloud the passage for the week: : Exodus 20:7 and 2 Peter 2:1-3. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful. Pray for your study of God's Word.

1. Re-read Exodus 20:8-11. The Israelites eventually established a number of laws to build a fence around the sabbath to ensure that no one would accidentally "work." These include things like baking, sewing, wood-work, cooking, writing two or more letters, lighting/extinguishing a fire, etc. In the modern era, observant Jews do not drive, flip light switches or even chew gum outside as it is considered carrying something. What do you think about these laws? In what ways could these be freeing or life giving?
2. The Heidelberg Catechism (a summary of Christian principles written in Germany in 1563) describes the sabbath as a "festive day of rest." It is to be a day filled with worship, with life-giving practices and renewal. What sorts of activities would you identify as "life-giving practices" for you? What activities would you abstain from in pursuit of "renewal?"
3. One reason we neglect the sabbath is that we believe OUR activity is the only determining factor in our success. We think we need to do more and more without ceasing to attain our full potential. What does it look like when people trust the Lord to be their provider, sustainer, deliverer and savior? Is this appealing? Or irresponsible?
4. Are Sundays (or another day) a "day of rest" for you? How has this been valuable (if you do practice this) or how would this impact you if you practiced it?

5. This commandment reminds us that God sets our limits, that Jesus is the Lord of our limits. We are not God and ceaseless activity does not determine our value. Describe the most recent experience you've had with living dangerously close to your limits. (A season where you were on the verge of burn out.)
6. What kinds of practices do you currently engage in to recharge and draw close to Christ? Are there any practices you hope to adopt in the coming weeks?



IN: Connect with Each Other

Share prayer requests with one another. What is burdening you in life right now? What do you need to lay at the feet of Jesus in order to "rest in the Lord?"



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

Last week you may have named a person in your life whom you hoped to intentionally and faithfully represent Christ to this fall. (If you didn't get to this last week take some time to go around the circle and name such a person)

Check in to see if anyone in your group had significant conversations with these people in the past week. Then close your time together by having one person pray for the burdens you just shared, and each of these people by name.