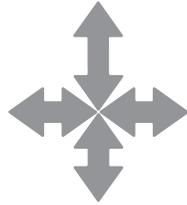




GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of September 23rd

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:

Who is the most patient person you know? How do they manage to remain patient in challenging situations?



UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word

Read aloud the passages for the week: Exodus 20:13 and Matthew 5:21–26. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. Re-read Exodus 20:13. Israel was in Egyptian captivity for several generations; during that time, they were dehumanized and enslaved. In giving Israel these commands, God was teaching His people what it meant to be human again. What does this brief command communicate about what it means to be human? What did Israel stand to learn from this command?
2. Historically, most cultures have had laws against killing. What makes this command so good for societies and so universally accepted?
3. Why doesn't this command note exceptions for self-defense, protecting others, or fighting wars? (Was there just not enough room on the tablet for footnotes?)
4. Re-read Matthew 5:21–26. Jesus seems to raise the bar with His words here. How are Jesus's words an appropriate application of Exodus 20:13 and how does He push beyond the commandment?
5. It often seems like we live in an angry world. News shows feature outraged commentators arguing their opinions, the people driving next to us express their anger in very clear ways, even our Facebook friends post antagonistically! How are we supposed to function in such a world? Is it really enough to just be aware of our own emotions? Why or why not?
6. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul warns them to not sin in their anger (Eph 4:26) and to not let the sun go down on their anger. Where is the line between non-sinful anger and sinful anger? How does one surrender anger before the sun goes down?

7. Jesus advocates leaving a gift at the foot of the altar in order to be reconciled to someone. The modern-day equivalent would be rising from your seat and leaving church as the offering is passed because you need to forgive someone or ask someone for forgiveness. What do you think about this? Is there anyone you can think of who you need to be reconciled to right now? What is stopping you from pursuing that reconciliation?



IN: Connect with Each Other

Spend some time in prayer for one another.

Go around the group asking whether there is someone in each person's life that either needs to be forgiven, or from whom they need to seek forgiveness. Pray for these people by name.

This may be a very difficult question and may require a high level of vulnerability so group leaders, be aware of your context and do not pressure people to respond. If this question is too vulnerable for where your group is currently at, feel free to ask for general prayer requests as you close your time.



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

Is there some small action you can take today (either individually or as a group) to lessen the anger in your life and in the world around you?

Maybe even just working to remember that people make poor choices at times, that our government leaders are human and that people typically react emotionally and not logically.