

## what life groups are all about

Life Groups are our main strategy for encouraging a life of following Jesus. These groups will be focused on learning four life-giving practices. These practices form the pattern of each group, and we will be sharing stories from our week of how these practices are growing in our lives:

- **Life-giving Prayer:** Prayer for the purpose of being with God rather than getting something from God. This kind of prayer is focused on God (The King) and what he is doing (building his Kingdom) rather than on what I want him to do for me. We often use the words “glory, honor, and thanks” from Rev. 4:9 to structure our time.
- **Life-giving Truth:** This is the practice of telling ourselves God’s truth over and over again so that it sinks into our hearts and changes us from the inside out. Practically, this means we will think through the truth which we learned in the Sunday Sermon. We will help each other process the truth of God’s Word together.
- **Life-giving Relationships:** This is an invitation to authenticity, being honest with yourself and others about what’s really going on in our hearts, clinging to the hope that God himself is able and willing to heal our brokenness as we seek him together. This is where learning the truths of grace and humility really will manifest itself. Being real is better than being perfect. Practically this means we will seek to pray for heart issues, not surface issues. For example, someone might want prayer for a job – he might be laid off. We want to know how we can pray for his heart – maybe he realizes that he is struggling with trusting God to care for him. And so we would pray God’s will in this area
- **Life-giving Impact:** Prayer is the work! We use the pattern of “Pray & Watch” – where we pray for those all around us and then watch for how God is working in their lives. When we see the Lord working, then we both rejoice and respond.

Life Groups are what we do during the week—we don’t have other programs. So if you want to be involved beyond Sunday morning, this is for you! We have men’s, women’s, and couples’ groups meeting. And if you want to learn more about these Four Life-giving practices and how they work, tell us you are interested in being part of our 4 week “Getting to know LEFC” where we share about these practices, our mission, and our values.



For the week starting Sunday, January  
17th, 2016

**My treasure in heaven can  
never be taken away**

Matthew 6:19-24

### Life-giving Prayer (about 10 min)

Do you have any stories to share this week about worshiping God in the everyday stuff of life?

Spend some time in Life-giving Prayer together. Praying short sentences, give God Glory, Honor, and Thanks. If you want, you can use one or more of the ideas below.

Idea: Use Psalm 50:7-15, our Call to Worship from Sunday, as a springboard to giving God Glory. What things in this passage amaze you about God?

Idea: Think about some things that worried you this week. Honor God by telling him you choose to trust him with \_\_\_\_\_, or surrendering \_\_\_\_\_ to him, or choosing him instead of \_\_\_\_\_.

Idea: Use the song we sang on Sunday, “In Christ alone” as a springboard to thank God for the things he has done through Christ alone (words are in your bulletin).

## **Life-giving Truth (about 45-55 min): My treasure in heaven can never be taken away. Matthew 6:19-24.**

Something you could do Before Life Group: In the teaching time Pastor Tom referenced the 2005 Commencement speech Steve Jobs gave at Sandford University. If you listen to it, notice how he encourages people to follow their heart. Do a Google or Youtube search for “Steve Jobs 2005 Sandford speech”. It's 15 min long.

### **Discussion Questions (Pick and choose questions—it's not a race to get through them all):**

1. **Think about our culture:** Jesus said “do not lay up treasures for yourself on earth....” **Can you think of a specific example** in your relationships, or movies, songs, or magazines, where people seem to believe the opposite: “Lay up treasure for yourself on earth”?

2. **Think about a case study:** Imagine you have a friend named Jared who says this: “Jesus is exaggerating to make a point. There is nothing wrong with having treasures on earth – houses, cars, collections, and so on. As long as you give 10% or so of your income to charity, you can spend money on whatever you want. Remember that it's the “love of money” that's bad, not money itself (1 Tim. 6:10). God made all things for us to enjoy, so I don't see any problem with enjoying them. If someone wants to buy a boat or take a trip or add onto their house, there's nothing wrong with that. Jesus said “do not lay up treasures on earth” just to remind us that they are temporary. And if you remember that, it's all good.” **What do you think?**

3. **Dig into some more Scripture:** Jesus refers to a “healthy eye” and a “bad eye” in verses 22-23. The “good eye” is a metaphor for generosity. The “bad eye” is a metaphor for stinginess. Consider these passages:

- Matthew 20:15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? Literally, “Or is your eye evil because I am good?”
- Proverbs 28:27 Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.
- Deut 15:9 Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye look grudgingly [literally, “your eye be evil”] on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin.”

Jesus is saying that “laying up treasure in heaven” is done by generously giving to the things dear to God's heart. Look at the following passages that show the connection between generosity and laying up treasure for yourself in heaven:

- Matthew 19:21
- Luke 12:33
- Luke 14:13
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19

**Why do you think God designed this connection between being generous and laying up treasure for yourself in heaven?**

4. In verse 24 Jesus claims that we either “serve” (the word is literally “be enslaved to”) God or money/possessions. **In what way do you think money or possessions can “enslave” a person?**

5. **Why do you think that Jesus said you can't love both money/possession and God?** What is it about these two “masters” that make your “service” an all-or-nothing deal?

6. **Is there anything in your life right now where the Life-giving Truth that My treasure in heaven can never be taken away could change how you are thinking about or responding to that situation?** If you can't think of anything, how might the Life-giving Truth that My treasure in heaven can never be taken away comfort you or give you courage in difficult times?

## **Life-giving Relationships (about 5-10 min)**

Does anyone want healing prayer this week? Remember, this is praying for the heart of you, the person, not the circumstances you are going through or other people in your life. Is there anything churning in your heart that we can pray for?

Not everybody needs to share – some weeks no one will share. When someone does share, pray for that person before someone else shares. And anyone may pray for that person – and short prayers are good prayers.

## **Life-giving Impact. (about 10 min)**

1. Does anyone have any Pray & Watch stories to share this week?
2. What is your plan to lean into someone on your Pray & Watch list this week?
3. Pray for the people on your Pray & Watch list.