

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, teen’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,
April 3rd, 2016

Only Jesus Can Forgive All My Sin

Matthew 9:1-8

Life-giving Prayer (about 10 min)

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

2. Try using the simple sentences below, filling in the blank. You could spend a bit of time on “glory”, people completing the sample sentence as many times as they want. Then move onto “Honor” and then “Thanks”.

Glory: God, it’s amazing that you _____.

Honor: God, I choose (or want or surrender) _____ to you.

Thanks: God, thank you for _____.

3. Look at the bulletin from Sunday. Go through the Scripture or a song and see if you can pick out statements that give God glory, honor, or thanks.

Life-giving Truth (about 45-55 min)

There are a lot of questions here. Your Life Group Coach will pick out a few below that are best suited for your Life Group to help process this week's Life-giving Truth. Don't try to answer every question – just think through a few together.

1. Last week's truth: Did you think about last week's Life-giving Truth *Jesus Always Accomplishes What He Sets Out To Do*? Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?
2. What are some ways people try to assuage their guilt or get rid of their sin when they know they have done wrong?
3. Frank says, “I'm too bad of a sinner for Jesus to forgive me.” Read Matthew 9:1-8. Notice how some of the scribes thought it was blasphemous for Christ to claim he could forgive sins, and yet Jesus says to them, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” Why would it likewise be “evil” of Frank to claim Jesus couldn't forgive him?
4. Grayson said, “I don't understand why Christians make such a big deal about 'sin'. I do understand that we shouldn't hurt others because they have rights. But if my actions don't hurt others, who's to say it's bad?” What would you say?
5. What is “sin”? Here are three passages to help your discussion: Genesis 2:16-17 and 3:6, Romans 3:23, and 1 John 3:4.
6. Pastor Tom called the healing of the Paralytic “An Unusual Healing”. What are some things you learned from this “unusual healing”?
7. Though we have sinned against people, the primary person we have sinned against is God. Read these passages: Genesis 20:1-6 (notice particularly verse 6); Genesis 39:7-9 (note verse 9); and Psalms 51:0 (the heading) and 4. After you have read these verses, discuss why you think a sin like David's (which seemed to be against Bathsheba and Uriah) was really against God.
8. Brooke is distraught because she chose to abort her baby. One of her friends has counseled her to fast in order to “counterbalance” her abortion. Yet Brooke knows that this can't fix her problem. Causing herself pain doesn't fix the pain she caused her baby. How would the truth that her sin was really against God (and he is rightly angry at her) help Brooke embrace the miracle of forgiveness – that Jesus shed his innocent blood to forgive her sin of shedding innocent blood?

9. Think of a past or present sin in your life that you still feel horrible about. Without going into the details of that sin, have you found that you try ways other than fleeing to Jesus for forgiveness to deal with your guilt? What have been some of those ways?

10. The fifth article in our Statement of Faith says that Jesus' blood was an “all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.” What would be the difference for our lives if our Statement instead read, “Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient only for the particular sins for which we ask forgiveness”?

Life-giving Relationships (about 5-10 min)

If we have prayed for you in the past weeks, have you seen any way, small or large, that God is healing you?

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?

Life-giving Impact (about 10 min)

1. Does anyone have any Pray & Watch stories from this week? Did you make a plan and follow through with getting together with anyone on your Pray & Watch list?
2. Get your your Pray & Watch list. Let's spend our last minute or two together praying over all these names together.