

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR GROUP

TEXT

SEND THIS TO EVERYONE IN YOUR GROUP:

Hi! I'm praying for you this week—that God will release the pressure valve you feel to be a “good Christian.” I'm praying that you'll rest in His love and let God's love motivate you to live and love like He does.

EMAIL:

Hey everyone! Hope you all are having a great week! I wanted to send out a quick email to let everyone know what we will be talking about in small group this week —our final week of “Story of My Life!” This week's message is titled “Picture Perfect” and it's about understanding the beautiful reality that God doesn't expect us to be perfect. He just wants us for who we are. In small group, we're going to talk about how we can invite God into our real lives while getting rid of our made-up expectations of perfection. I can't wait to dive in deeper to this freeing truth with you!

Here are the details for our meeting:

Date/time: Address:

Our weekly Bible Reading Plan and the questions for this week are attached.

(NOTE TO LEADER: Here, add a section that starts with the question: “What happens now?” And then answer that question. Let your group know that this is the last week of this series, and use this part of the email to let your group know what to expect after this week. Will you continue to meet? Is there a new series you could mention? Also, include a short personal note about how you've enjoyed leading them for the last six weeks. Then wrap up the email.) Thanks so much for being a part of this group!

BIBLE READING PLAN

If you're looking for a more personal way to encourage your group members to read Scripture, try texting each day's Scripture and prompt to the group. Or, EMAIL THEM out each week. That way they have each day's reading as the week begins.

MONDAY (Day 1) Matthew 11:28

Are you tired of always trying to live up to the perfect expectations of some people's view of Christianity? Rest today in the truth that God doesn't want anything from you. He wants a better story for you.

TUESDAY (Day 2) Proverbs 16:3

Talk to God and commit whatever work you're doing today to Him.

WEDNESDAY (Day 3) 1 Timothy 4:10

Is your hope in God or in your own abilities and effort? Ask God to give you rest, knowing that He is your hope and the hope for everyone.

THURSDAY (Day 4) Ephesians 2:8-9

Rest today that your salvation from your sins was a free gift God gave you—you didn't earn it, and you don't have to fight to keep it.

FRIDAY (Day 5) Isaiah 30:15

How can your salvation be in repentance and rest? Ask God to help you quit working so hard to earn His love and rest in the salvation He has given you.

SUMMARY

The last few weeks we've been talking about the idea that each of our lives tells a story. And how, maybe more than anything else, we all want the story of our lives to be a good one. The problem is that the road to a better life story isn't always an easy one. There are setbacks and failures that make it seem as if our life story will never be as good as we want it to be. What's more, it often seems as if we're the only people struggling to live a good life story; we're the only ones who can't get it right. The truth is that we're not alone. Everyone who has ever wanted to make their life better has fallen short at times. Everyone who has tried to do what's right has, at some point, done what's wrong. We know we aren't perfect people, and the good news is this: God knows this too. That's why He doesn't expect us to be perfect—He just asks us not to give up and to continue loving and following Him. God doesn't use perfect people in His story—He uses broken people, because that's the only kind of people He has. So, no matter where you are in your life story, you're in a place where you can be used by God. This week, lay down the perfect picture of what you think it means to be a Christian and invite God into your real picture. He will meet you there.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are a guide to get the conversation started in your group—don't feel like you need to ask everything you see here! As long as you're having a conversation, you're on the right track. Also, feel free to adjust the questions for the needs of your specific group.

- WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THIS SERIES SO FAR? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE IDEA OF CHANGING YOUR LIFE STORY? ENCOURAGED, OVERWHELMED, CHALLENGED?
- DESCRIBE YOUR IDEA OF A "PERFECT CHRISTIAN."
- EVERY ONE OF US STILL SINS AFTER BECOMING A CHRISTIAN. WHAT'S YOUR KNEE-JERK REACTION WHEN YOU MESS UP? WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOD'S REACTION?
- HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO KNOW THAT SCRIPTURE—GOD'S STORY—IS FULL OF MISFITS AND PEOPLE WHO FAILED?
- WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY IF YOU WERE CERTAIN THAT GOD CAN USE YOU EXACTLY AS YOU ARE?
- OTHER THAN YOU, WHOSE LIFE STORY COULD BE AFFECTED IF YOU DECIDED TO LET GOD USE YOU, DESPITE YOUR FAILURES?
- AS A GROUP, HOW CAN WE HELP YOU NOT TO GIVE UP WHEN YOU MESS UP?

CONSIDER THIS - LIFEGROUP APPLICATION

Read the following application before your group meets. Then, take a moment after your discussion to go over this application with your Life Group. How does this relate to your Life Group? Is it something you are already doing? If so, how can you do it better? If not, what steps can your group take to make this application happen?

Life Group is a place for everyone to take the next step in their faith, whatever step that may be. Odds are, the people in your group are all at different places in their faith. Take some time to learn what the “next step” is for everyone, and do what you can to facilitate each person’s individual step. For some members of your group, reading the Bible regularly may be the next step. For others, the next step may simply be owning a Bible. Some members of your group may be ready to lead a small group of their own. Wherever your group members are on their faith journey, you can help them identify and take the next step. If you try to make everyone take the same specific step in their spiritual life, you’ll end up frustrated because everyone needs to be challenged differently, some more than others. Remember, because everyone’s spiritual journey is different, spiritual growth will look different for everyone. It’s not your responsibility to get everyone to the same place. However, it is your job to help make sure everyone is growing and moving in the right direction. Before this week begins, write down the names of each member of the group. Pray for them and jot down an idea of what their “next step of faith” may look like. If you get the chance, find a way to encourage some of them to take that step.

WRAPPING UP

PRAY

Praying for one another is an essential part in growing in community and in our faith. Take some time at the end of each session to allow your group to offer any prayer requests they may have. Then, allow someone to lead the group in prayer. One person may do the entire prayer or you may have someone open the prayer, allow for others to pray and then someone to close.

SERIES THOUGHTS

WE want to know what your Life Group thought about this series. This allows us to better equip our Life Groups for success. Please take a few minutes to ask your groups thoughts on the series. Please email Michele at michele@weomaha.com with your feedback.

MAKE PLANS TO MEET AGAIN

Remind everyone that you will be meeting again next week. If you need to make plans regarding location or meals, now is a great time to do that. This way, you can include the info in your reminder email.

The Story Of My Life

WEEK 4 - PICTURE PERFECT
LEADERS GUIDE

LEADER NOTES