

# LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Matthew 15:1-20

## LEADER'S STUDY

### **The Heart Matters:**

Last week Scripture showed clearly that faith and action (or works) are inseparable. The natural outflow of genuine faith is active obedience to God. Real obedience to God is more than just external. It's more than just lip service. It's not just following the rules, it is genuine heart change. Just like our works are evidence of our faith, our actions and words are evidence of what is in our hearts. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 15 and consider what He is calling for. Genuine faith and heart change results in a re-alignment of our heart. There is always evidence of God changing our hearts. He changes the way we think, the way we act and the way we speak. His priorities become ours and we begin to love the things that He loves. That kind of faith and obedience is actually relationship with God. Through the work of Jesus and His Spirit living in us we can align ourselves with Him and accept His invitation to "follow Him"

What is the evidence of your faith? What do your words and actions say about what is in your heart? How are you aligned with the Spirit of God? What parts of your life is God inviting you to align with Him? How has God changed you? Take some time to pray and listen to God as you think on His words. This week share some stories of How God has changed your heart and celebrate His work together. Be willing to share areas that he is calling your to "follow Him" and make clear I statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scripture: James 3:1-12, Psalm 40, Col 3:13-16  
What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

How is God calling you to think and to live differently? How does this change your perspective today? How is God calling you to respond based on this scripture? Spend some time reading this whole chapter and meditating on it as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word.

## PREPARING BEFORE GROUP

**PURPOSE:** Life transformation through the Holy Spirit. He uses scripture and prayer to renew our minds and transform our lives!

**PRAY:** Pray for the people in your groups by name. Spend time asking the Holy Spirit to help you lead well as you meditate on key passages and seek to know God's heart.

**PLAN:** As you prepare for your group things to remember:

- Relationships are the primary way we glorify God. Healthy deep relationships that lead each other to know and follow Jesus are built on trust.
- Share stories of how God is working in your heart and how you or others are taking steps of growth
- Sometimes it is helpful to break into smaller groups for prayer. People often feel more comfortable sharing personal things in a smaller group.

### **A Culture of Growing:**

Faith and active obedience is saying yes to Jesus. It is normal for growing believers to say yes to Jesus when faced with trials. Be sure to talk about how God is asking you to follow Him and encourage one another in it!

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## INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Matthew 15:1-20

in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation.

READ AGAIN in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective.

Or try retelling the story in your own words with your bibles closed, then look to see what you missed, changed, moved or left out.

(With larger portions of scripture, it's good for multiple people to read it aloud. Especially online, this helps people get used to using their voice)

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

**What is significant, surprising or confusing from these verses?**

**What did you discover or learn about God and His character from this passage?**

**What have you learned or discovered about people from this passage?  
Another way to ask is: How can people respond?**

**What do the pharisees seem to be upset about?**

**What does it look like to honor God?**

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

**How are you going to obey this passage?**

**What is your "I will" statement?**  
(Encourage everyone to steer clear of "we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

**With whom are you going to share what you have learned?**  
(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears the it. Rom 10:17)

**Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?**