

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Matthew 5:43-48

LEADER'S STUDY

God's is good:

Have you ever questioned the goodness of God? Does it ever seem like evil and corruption are winning and compassion and goodness are getting trampled underfoot? Have you ever been angry about circumstances or seeming unfairness? Does it seem wrong to even ask these questions? If you have ever found yourself thinking or asking questions like these you are not alone. God is not afraid of questions like these and He actually points us to His ultimate goodness and justice through every page of scripture. As you read this week, think about how God has shown mercy towards His enemies and still acted in complete justice in response to sin. How can God be merciful and just at the same time? Scripture points to Jesus as the answer to both. Because of His death and resurrection, we have received mercy, while Jesus took our punishment and completely satisfied God's justice.

Knowing this how do you respond? How do you respond to God? How do you respond to others? How do you respond to sin and injustice? How do you respond to not knowing what God is doing? How is God inviting you to follow Him? Are my relationships leading others to know God and His grace? What does it look like to love your enemies? How is God changing my thinking? Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scripture: Psalm 37, Ephesians 2, Romans 3, Philippians 2
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
- Start thinking and talking about how God might multiply your group

Start looking for leaders among your group. As you identify people who are gifted at recognizing the character of God in His word, or people who make relationships easy or those who are really prayerful or welcoming, invite them into opportunities to use those gifts in your group. It could be that your next co-leader is sitting right next to you!

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Matthew 5:43-48

Read Matthew 5:43-48 in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation.

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective.

(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 seems to be the main point of these verses?

How does this scripture change your thinking?

Why did God bring me to this scripture today?

What parts of this passage are challenging to your current way of thinking?

What effect does this have on my relationships right now?

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?