

# LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Matthew 22:34-40

## LEADER'S STUDY

### **Love that transforms:**

When religious leaders asked Jesus what the most important commandment was, they were relying on their understanding of the law to trap Jesus into some sort of inconsistency or partiality. The Pharisees not only relied on their knowledge of the law but also their adherence to it. They were relying on their goodness or their good works as credit for God's favor. In other words, their "goodness" is what they were counting on for God's approval. Jesus, clearly seeing through this, answers with the ultimate opposition to self-righteousness. Love. Rather than earning God's favor by works Jesus points to loving God as the only reason for any good work. Love for God leads to love for others and to genuine obedience. In fact, obedience that comes from a love for God is the only true obedience. Obedience for any other reason is self-serving and it is not obedience at all.

Perhaps as you read this you are thinking, how can I have that love for God? Maybe you are like me and are overwhelmed by all the ways you have fallen short of keeping the two most important commands of God. The truth is in verses 37 and 39, Jesus points to an obedience that everyone has fallen short of. There was only one who fulfilled those commandments completely, and He did it on our behalf. That is the overwhelming, wrecking ball of the gospel. We couldn't do it. We couldn't keep these commands. We couldn't love God perfectly, let alone one another. So, He did it for us. He did it all because we couldn't. He showed us what real love is when He died in our place so that we could be seen as perfect before God. We can only love because He first loved us. Jesus was so lovingly telling the Pharisees (and us) that until we can abandon the hope that we have in our "good works" to save us or make us somehow more appealing to God, we will never know true love. Until we surrender to the flood of God's undeserved grace, we will always be trying to save ourselves. God's love is the only thing that saves us, and it is the only thing that motivates us to obedience. God's love can not be earned and the only way to love God with all your heart, is to first know and receive His love for you.

As you read and prepare for this week ask yourself; Do I love God? What has God done for me? Are there ways that I am depending on my goodness for God's approval? What kind of love is God's love leading you to? Who and how is God calling you to love? Who do I know that needs to hear this good news? How is God revealing Himself and his character through this scripture? How is God changing my thinking? How do I view others, and myself, differently because of the gospel? Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scripture: Romans 5:1, 6:23, 3:24, Revelation 2:1-7, 1 John 4:7-21, James 2:14-17  
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:**

This is the last week of the semester. Spend some time talking about what your group will look like this fall? Who could lead? Is it time to branch out another group so more people can experience what your group has meant to you? What are your plans for the summer? Often groups will use this break to continue building relationships, do ministry and life together, invite more people in. Perhaps there is an opportunity for smaller groups to develop out of your group. Embrace these conversations together with your group and ask how can we keep saying yes to Jesus together?

## **INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING**

READ Matthew 22:34-40

And meditate on it.

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

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective. (The New Living Translation is particularly helpful with this passage)

Consider reading the whole chapter or even the whole letter before your meeting to help you understand the context.

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

## **POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS**

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

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

**What seems to be the main point of these verses?**

**How does this portion of scripture point to Jesus and the gospel?**

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

**Look at one or two key words and define them really clearly, then look at them in context with that definition. Does this change your understanding?**

**Why did God bring me to this scripture today?**

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

## **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**How is God calling you to obey, based on this passage?**

or

**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 it. Rom 10:17)

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