

Getting into Our LivesGroup time - 20 minutes

1. What are some of the reasons we're tempted to break our word? How does the gospel free us to be people of truth?

2. What are the more difficult personal injustices to let go of? When can fighting for justice get in the way of sharing the love of God?

3. Who are the people in your life that the world would never expect you to show love to? How can you take a step towards showing them God's love?

Getting Out the GospelGroup time - 5 minutes

Identify who you would like to share the gospel with this Winter. You can list out specific names or a general group of people that you come into regular contact with. These will be who you specifically pray for during the "Reach" section below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Getting into PrayerGroup time - 10 minutes

Reach: "God, our Father, may your sons and daughters stand out in this world and attract others to your unusual self-giving love."

Grow: "Help us to be true to our words just like you are faithful. Help us to see beyond personal hurts to the life that you long to give. Grow in us a love so strong that even those who hurt us will feel cared for."

Empower: "We know it is only by your Holy Spirit at work in our hearts that this can be accomplished – so work in us and help us to encourage one another to do the same."

Followers of Jesus... Follow!
Matthew 5:33-48

I. Be True to Your Word

Matthew 5:33-37

II. Give of Yourself for Others

Matthew 5:38-42

III. Love Like God Loves

Matthew 5:43-48

I never knew:

I need to change:

I should share:

GROWTH GROUP QUESTIONS

Week of January 7, 2018

Getting StartedGroup time - 15 minutes

1. If there are new people in your group, do brief introductions with each person sharing something from their Christmas or New Year celebrations.
2. Take a few minutes as a group to look over the *Growth Group Covenant*. (Your leader will have it at your first meeting).
3. Have you ever tried to learn a foreign language? Describe your journey, including what was most difficult or why you stopped.

FOR GROWTH GROUP TIME

Getting into God's WordGroup time - 40 minutes

Read Matthew 5:33-37

1. How did people in Jesus' time avoid keeping their promises?
2. What is the simpler way Jesus wants us to speak?

APPLICATION

What is a situation where you failed to keep your word? What sort of excuses did you use to try to justify it?

Read Matthew 5:38-42

3. What is the old guide for how to respond to personal injury? What do you think was the intent for those instructions?
4. How does Jesus change the focus of the one who is harmed?
5. Why should the person harmed be willing to have even more taken from them? How does this fit with your natural sense of justice? **See also: Romans 12:17-18**

Read Matthew 5:43-48

6. Jesus partially quotes scripture and partially appeals to "common sense." In Jesus' mind, why is this way of looking at the world deficient? Who does He give as examples to compare to?
7. Why is loving enemies and praying for persecutors such a difficult request? How can the gospel free us to embrace this? **See also: Romans 5:6-11**
8. How does Jesus' final command to this section (vs 48) help us understand the goal of these "new ways" of living?