

CONNECT GROUP LEADER GUIDE

HEADS UP! #9 A Sharpened Focus

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

How alert are we to live for the will of God? Who else have you known who lived life with a gospel focus similar to Billy Graham in this story? What do you admire about them? With your group honestly diagnose “what holds you back” in this area. Many of us secretly feel guilty for not being better at living out and sharing the gospel more naturally. Understanding what holds us back or what makes others excel in living for the will of God is an important place to start with this week’s study.



A LOOK AT THE WORD

Note that Peter speaks not simply of making better decisions but of living FOR something (v.2). Only in the gospel of grace are we given the power to surrender all our rights and live for Christ (cf. Phil. 3:7-9). The work of a Christian, the fulfillment of the law, is simply this: love. Yet love is hard. How do we love others? And how do we do so earnestly? Only the gospel generates such inside-out affection and service of others, for Jesus Christ has loved us earnestly. As our hearts are armed by the love of Christ, we are changed. We delight to love others (cf. Eph. 4:32-5:2). (ESV Gospel Transformation Bible)

Short on Time? – Read 1Peter 4:7-11 and note two highlights as you discuss the 4 ways we live for the will of God: prayer, love, hospitality, and gifting. Highlight and discuss the “one another’s” in the passage, and then highlight in v.11 the goal, “in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

Keep the group focused – This study asks us to do some self-evaluation, looking in the mirror at our own lives, but don’t let your group get stuck there staring into the mirror. The primary issue we are evaluating is how we are doing at loving others in a way that makes Jesus look good. That is living for the will of God, on an others focused mission.

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

We hope to see people experience the grace of God through Jesus and then begin to grow in their faith in a very life-defining way through our groups. Encourage people to personally wrestle with these life questions. They are meant to be self-evaluation questions, not boxes to check off. Growing in these six key areas as individuals will help each of us to live for the will of God instead of for ourselves. Did this study cause some self-evaluation in any of these 6 questions for people in your group?

LIFE QUESTIONS

- Did God make my day?
- Is the Spirit flowing through me?
- Who am I fishing with?
- Who shares my tough stuff?
- How worn is my welcome mat?
- How are my investments doing?

Christ Community Church - Announcements

- ⊙ **The Perfect Gift** is coming! Save the date - December 10! Watch for opportunities to serve, donate and share the event with others.
- ⊙ **First Principles Bible Study Class** | NOV 6 through DEC 11, 10:45a in the north side of Gather 2. This 6 week course on Sunday mornings will teach you some fundamental skills for studying God’s Word and how to apply that study to teaching others. For information and registration information visit ccames.org/classes or contact Ron Stubbs at rstubbs@ccames.org.
- ⊙ **Congregational Meeting** | Our next Congregational Meeting is Sunday, NOV 6, 4:30-6:00p in Room G2, with child care through 5th grade in the Orbit Ministry area.



CONNECT GROUP STUDY

HEADS UP! #9 A Sharpened Focus 1 Peter 4:1-11

OVERVIEW: This CGS will focus on Peter's encouragement to LIVE FOR THE WILL OF GOD through serious prayer, covering love, eager hospitality, and engaged gifting.

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

Evangelist Billy Graham is 97 years old – awaiting his "graduation" but still eager to live purposefully. Over the years of his public speaking, he could even turn a "sound check" into an opportunity to share the gospel. Larry Ross, who handled public relations for Graham's organization recalls, "Almost always before a TV interview, Graham would be asked to do a microphone check, suggesting he count to 10 or say the alphabet. Mr. Graham would always quote John 3:16 – **For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.** When asked why, Graham replied, 'If I don't personally meet the cameraman, at least he will have heard the gospel in the sound check!'"

How alert do you think we Christians are for opportunities to "live for the will of God" like this? What holds us back? What might spur on more of this?

A LOOK AT THE WORD

This week's teaching from 1 Peter 4 found the Apostle urging us to *live for the will of God* in 4 key ways. Let's explore each a bit further.

SERIOUS PRAYER - 1 Peter 4:7 - Read this verse again. Note that "be self-controlled" literally means "maintain a disciplined mind," followed by "exercise vigilance" for the sake of your praying. Share with your group the most important things you are praying for these days. Why are these things so important to you?

COVERING LOVE – 1 Peter 4:8 – Ask and answer together: *What are the common ways we sin against each other? [give examples] When these things happen, do you think Peter is suggesting that our love for one another simply excuse when sin occurs? If not, what does true love do in the face of sin? Cf. Romans 12:9-10.*

EAGER HOSPITALITY – 1 Peter 4:9 - "hospitality" literally means "showing practical love to strangers" especially in opening your home. The joy of sharing your home can have life-shaping impact. *But what are the practical challenges in doing this?* (e.g., "it's a lot of work!" a wife might say). *Why do you think God still urges us to do this, "without grumbling"?*

ENGAGED GIFTING – 1 Peter 4:10-11 - Our gifting is "categorized" in one of two groupings: speaking gifting or servicing gifting. What kind of gifting, principally, do you have? *Share how you are using your gifting for the kingdom these days. If your gift is "on the bench" right now, what might Ephesians 4:16 urge in your life?*

Before we leave this section – look at the 4 "living the will of God" items above. Which one(s) needs energizing in your walking with the Lord Jesus Christ these days?

MY LIFE- MY FAMILY-OUR MISSION

MY LIFE – Reviewing Peter's simple instructions, we can feel the tug of the Spirit **to integrate God's will into everyday living** more intentionally. CCC's life-questions can springboard us forward here. "Is the Spirit flowing through me?" can be energized by 5 minutes of intentional prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to fill you for the day. "Sharing your tough stuff" can be confessing sin to a spiritual friend over lunch, and asking for his/her honest help, that you might experience his covering love in your life.

MY FAMILY – Ask your family members for ideas on how to use your apartment or home to show love and kindness to an international couple or family who has never yet been in an American home. Call the CCC office for suggestions on who to invite over for a simple meal and fellowship.

OUR MISSION – Will you devote yourself this week to SERIOUS PRAYING for the mission of Christ Community Church? Each day, pray this prayer as part of our team: *Lord Jesus Christ – our church longs for You to make us fruitful in connecting people to life-defining relationships in Christ. Dear Lord – move among us! Fill us with your Spirit. Give us eyes to see those who need this connection to us, and through us, to You! Make us fruitful, O God, make us fruitful in this mission as we do life-together.*