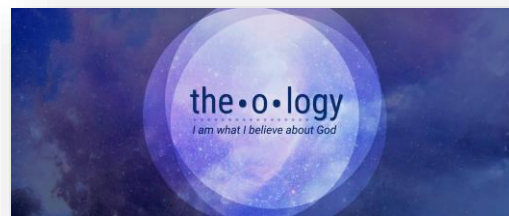


CONNECT GROUP LEADER GUIDE

THEOLOGY #3



BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

Are you a HUMBLE person? As you lead your group in a discussion about broken things in your lives, you will **have** to lead the way. Very rarely will a group be vulnerable with each other without the example of their leader going first. So, think ahead of time about an example you are willing to share of a time when something very important to you was broken and what steps you took to restore it. Pray that God will lead you by the Spirit to have the right words and the right posture here.

A LOOK AT THE WORD

A story about humility before God. Whether the people in your group have never read this story or heard it 100 times, encourage them to stop and ask God to speak to them through it today. I am confident that God will speak in new and fresh ways through the study of this passage as you slow down and study the details more closely. Ask your group to identify what feelings or emotions the men praying are likely experiencing.

***I loved this **note in the ESV Gospel Transformation Bible**, *“This is good news indeed. Jesus is not calling us to a plan of moral improvement or a list of wrong behaviors to avoid (18:11), but rather to the one thing that we can all pursue, no matter our brokenness or failures: to humble ourselves before God and call upon his mercy.”*

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

Ask the group to share any experiences they had from discussing last week’s study with their family. What went well? What surprised them? There is a variety of ways that the Holy Spirit may be directing people to apply this week’s teaching – encourage people to share one idea from this section that they are feeling challenged to work into their life this week. Pray for each other as people share what they are hoping to apply this week.

Christ Community Church - Announcements

Radical generosity | at Christ Community we value it and you have shown it! Thank you for your generous giving this Christmas! We were able to send \$4,409 to Rachel Balia and Global Fingerprints to purchase items like chickens, pigs, sewing machines and bibles. Locally, we provided Christmas gifts for 7 families through the Emergency Residence Project, as well as 61 gift cards, totaling a little over \$5,000. Carloads of coats, winter wear and clothing were also donated and distributed to ERP, Matthew 25 House and Curt Forbes Residential Center. Thank you for your radical generosity!

Women’s Morning YADA [study/fellowship] | Thursdays, 9:30-11:00a in C3/4. Spring study, Lisa Harper’s “Perfect Love”. Come join us for a new study and a great time of connection and fellowship. Childcare provided. Contact Lyndee Heemstra lyndeerose04@gmail.com with questions.

SERVE | CHURCH

Blinks Volunteers Needed | for the upcoming Upward Basketball season. Contact Marilyn Rohlf to find out more information [jammr@isunet.net or 515-203-1018].

LAUNCH | Beginning Bible readers need a chaperone. An 8wk-Launch is about to blast off again. Interested in becoming a "Bible-reading chaperone" for a group of 3rd-5th grade students? Contact Karen at kheilighenthal@ccames.org or 232-2765. Launch runs on Wednesdays [JAN 18-MAR 8] from 6:30-8:00p.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

SERIES: The-o-logy: I Am What I Believe about God

GOD and My Need #3 January 22-28.2017

This week's teaching explored the following Biblical principle about how God reclaims and restores people – **Brokenness before God begets** (or gives birth to) **wholeness in God**. Why explore this? Simply put – as people share "their tough stuff" with us, struggling with lives and families that are often broken by sin, we can have a "welcome mat" ministry to them, gently pointing them to a God who loves to fix what is broken and restore to wholeness in Christ.

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

[Excluding an answer like "my relationship with Christ,"] Name 3 important, tangible things to you in life. Your list might include things your health, your spouse, children or grandchildren, your calling/vocation, a major investment. Now, imagine what it would look like if each of these were broken.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

After a few moments of thinking this out, share your answers to (a) Would you be serious about fixing what was wrong? Perhaps you have a recent example. (b) What steps are important to restoring something broken to wholeness?

Now...take an extra moment to discuss this: "What are the broken things God wants to help fix in people's lives?" (make a group list!)

A LOOK IN GOD'S WORD

Today's teaching offered this about God bringing us back to wholeness:

- *Sin mars the image of God in our lives*
- *A God-of-grace comes seeking with truth to restore*
- *Restoration begins by being broken over sin*
- *Humility releases God's restoring grace*

Take the time to talk about the attitude of **humility**. Why does God prize it so?

Sometimes, we don't admit the fact of, nor realize the true extent, of our brokenness, the absence of true humility before God. In your Bible's find Luke 18:9-14. Read aloud this parable. Explore it – answering these questions can get things started -

1st – Luke notes the reason Jesus told this parable. How would you put the Lord's reason in your own words?

2nd – What do you know about the "reputation" of each of the two praying men? [If someone has a Study Bible, footnotes from the verses may help] Contrast the reputations by completing phrases like "One was _____; while the other was _____."

3rd – What's different about both their posture and their prayers. Observe the descriptions closely (what do the details reveal?) What do you "hear" in each prayer?

4th – Jesus makes his point in vs. 14. What is it (actually, there are at least 2 points, or lessons)?

STRENGTH THRU SHARING: In which of these men do you see yourself? Have you ever gone through a bit-of-a-process with the Holy Spirit where He first showed you "You are the Pharisee," and then "You must become like the tax-gatherer?" Share your story. [NOTE: if you will be open & candid with each other, great encouragement can result!]. *How does James 5:16 say we can help each other?*

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

MY LIFE – Humility before God opens all of His doors of grace. How is God speaking to you about the condition of your heart and life before Him today? Any chance some measure of pride fully cherished sin is hindering your "vertical" relationship with God, and perhaps some "horizontal" relationships with others? Notice what happens next in Luke 18:15-17. I am to be like "what" before God?

YOUR FAMILY – At family dinner, take a silent poll. Hand out slips of paper and have everyone vote for "the most humble person in our family" (candidates could include extended family). Identify the "winner," and then figure out why that family member was chosen. Perhaps unpack why each family member chose the person he/she did. Discuss humility – why does God prize this attitude? Why does He *always* oppose proud people?

OUR MISSION - No secret: we live in a world where God's image in people is often ruined by sin, where relationships are unhealthy, where families are broken. How can we humbly invite broken people we know to find restoration and wholeness in Christ? We must refrain from "judging" while at the same time being alert to loving, ministry opportunity. Take some extra time to **ask the Holy Spirit to flow through you**, alert to others' brokenness, ready to bring a hopeful step toward Christ.