

Life Group Participant Guide – Leader’s Notes

For the week of October 29nd, 2017

Quick Review

1. Mark discussed some biblical words which are often “hot buttons” for us: terms like **submit**, **obey** and **slave**. Why do these words cause defensive reactions/emotions?
2. Respond to the idea Mark raised: “If we will just submit to each other as we submit to Christ, all will be well in our relationships. There will be Shalom. That is, ‘peace, health, prosperity.’”

A DESCRIPTION OF SHALOM: Warren Wiersbe reminds us that “The world bases its peace on its resources, while God’s peace depends on relationships. (specifically those who are “declared righteous [right] with God by faith and who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” Ro 5:1-note) To be right with God means to enjoy the peace of God (“which surpasses all comprehension” Phil 4:7-note). The world depends on personal ability, but the Christian depends on spiritual adequacy in Christ (“Who made us adequate as servants of a New Covenant, not of the law, but of the Spirit; for the law kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Cor 3:6-note). In the world, peace is something you hope for or work for (John 14:27-note); but to the Christian, peace is God’s wonderful gift, received by faith (for “Jehovah will bless His people with shalom” Ps 29:11-note). Unsaved people enjoy peace when there is an absence of trouble (But there is no genuine abiding “shalom for the wicked” Isa 48:22-note); Christians enjoy peace in spite of trouble because of the presence of the power (dynamis) of the Holy Spirit (for “the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace” Ro 8:6-note) People in the world walk by sight and depend on externals, but (Followers of Christ) walk by faith (2 Cor 5:7-note) and depend on eternal things (continually choosing to “set our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth” fixing “our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ” Col 3:2-note, 1 Pe 1:13-note).” (Scriptures added)

My Story

1. Growing up, which relationships with “authority figures” were difficult for you? Explain.

Which ones were positive? Why?

2. What habits of relating did you learn from your family of origin?

There are a number of common habits and ways people relate, based on what they observed or learned from parents, grandparents and siblings. Some examples: Avoidance of conflict (ignoring a problem, hoping it will just go away), being the family “peace-maker”, domineering, shaming others into submission, the “silent treatment”, maintaining grudges and being unforgiving.

Digging Deeper

1. Read **Ephesians 4:17-32**.

Identify ways God equips and empowers Christians to relate in new ways.

From the passage: We have an enlightened understanding (17, 18), recipients of the life of God in Christ (18), we have heard and understood Jesus’ Truth (21), we can be renewed in the mind (23), we have put on the new Christ-like self (24), we have been sealed by God’s Holy Spirit (30) and can therefore treat people as God has treated us in Christ (32)

Also see Colossians 3:18-21, a parallel passage.

Which commands in the passage are most needed in Christian relationships?

What concrete applications can you see from verse 29?

(From Richard Strauss, Getting Along with Each Other). Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.... (4:29)

The word **unwholesome** means “decayed, rotten or diseased.” It was used of rotten fruit or fish. Rotten words are not just useless ones, they are destructive and harmful. What sort of words should be eliminated?

Cutting words

Nagging words

Exaggerated words

Vengeful words

Encouraging means the kind of communication that will build others to be all God desires them to be. You can ask questions like: “Do my words build up and encourage people in my life? Are these the things this person needs to hear at this time? Will this communication benefit them in some way?”

Encouraging words include:

Gentle words

Understanding words

Appreciative words

2. Consider **Matthew 5:3-12** together. For what radically different relational attitudes and responses in Christ-followers does Jesus call? Why are these attitudes and responses counter to how we normally think, act and respond?
3. Read **1 Peter 5:1-6**, thinking about relationships in the context of the local church. How does the foundational command to **humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God** relate to mutual submission?

What differences would we see in relationships if we commonly approached others with an attitude of humility and submission?

Taking it Home

1. Which relationship(s) of yours need(s) new, biblical and healthy approaches?
2. Identify one person: what step will you take to resolve/restore/strengthen that relationship – and how can your life group offer you accountability?