

Community Group Guide @ our core – Simpler Living

The Gathering

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Philippians 4:12

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

In what may be the most counter-cultural teaching of the "@ our core" series, Pastor Paul shared so me unbelievable statistics about consumer spending in America and then taught about the value of **Simpler Living** and how a lifestyle of contentment can enable greater and more generous giving. He shared 3 truths about contentment:

1. **Contentment is a secret.** When something is a secret, it's safe to assume that it isn't widely known or commonly practiced. Living with contentment is no exception. In a culture of external greed driven by internal needs, not needing stuff to think we have enough is rare. If we want to live the truth of Philippians 4:13, then we've got to learn the secret on Philippians 4:11-12 first.
2. **Contentment is seen in how we sow.** Stingy people are usually grumpy people. That sounds mean, but we all know it's true. Whether or not you've learned the secret of contentment is reflected in how you give (2 Corinthians 9:6-7): generously or sparingly. When we understand that God supplies endlessly, then we're free to give generously (2 Corinthians 9:8-11).
3. **Contentment is a springboard to greater gain.** According to 1 Timothy 6:5-6, Paul makes a pretty bold statement. He says that godliness isn't enough to achieve great gains unless something is added to it. That something is, you guessed it, contentment. When we have contentment, we are free from the evil that the love of money can lead to and find ourselves living a life full of confidence (1 Timothy 6:12), hope, blessings and sharing (vv. 17-18).

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Do you remember any of the statistics that Pastor Paul shared about American consumerism? How did you find yourself reacting as you heard them?
- Americans spend an average of 6 hours a week shopping and 40 minutes a week playing with our children and there are twice as many shopping centers in our country as high schools. What do these stats reveal about American values?
- Read Romans 12:2. How much of a struggle is it for you to not conform to the pattern of the world in this area? What insight could you share with the group about how you have overcome the consumer trap?
- Read Philippians 4:11-13 and discuss the difference between being content and being irresponsible. How can we fulfill our responsibilities in the many areas of our lives and still have contentment?
- What we do should always come from who we are because our external acts rest on the foundation of our internal attitudes. Paul writes about “being” content instead of “doing” contentment. What does this mean to you?
- How can this insight help you not feel like contentment is just one more responsibility to add to an already overwhelming to-do list?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:17-18 and discuss what role sharing the blessings of God plays in our enjoyment of the blessings of God.

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.