

# LIFE GROUP LESSON

Grow Up • Week of November 24

The Christian faith is the most outsider-driven movement in human history. But have you ever wondered why Christ-followers don't always act like Christ who included 'outsiders'? Faith is a journey and sometimes Christ-followers get lost in a desire to be accepted by the culture. But once a Christ-follower realizes he or she is drifting away from the commission of our Lord to love people on the outside, hopefully he or she will begin to re-adjust to the heart of God.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, God came looking for them. Christ-followers have a new identity in Christ that should emulate the heart of God. "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). We no longer fall back on the old thought-patterns and behaviors. Instead of writing people off, we witness to them (in word and deed) about the unfailing love of Christ.

## Read 1 Peter 1:13-25, 2:1-3

"So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment" (1 Peter 2:1-2). When we lose our way, God is always ready to re-ground us in Himself and through His Word. The psalmist says: "I have tried hard to find you—don't let me wander from your commands" (Psalm 119:10).

We know we are drifting away from God's truth when we begin to judge others, depend upon ourselves more than God, slip back into self-preservation mode, or allow our fear of people to silence our convictions. The apostle Paul reminds us, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think" (Romans 12:2a). Once they met Christ, both Peter and Paul were no longer the same person.

1. It is vital that we learn to cooperate with the Lord's indwelling Spirit according to Romans 12:2 and 1 Peter 1:14. What does 'changing the way you think' mean?

If you have trusted in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, what areas have you noticed a change in *the way you think* since becoming a Christ-follower? What areas still need some Holy Spirit - adjustment?

As you begin to imitate Christ, "...you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:2b). You will begin "to show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters" (1 Peter 1:22). The ability to deeply love others is a special kind of love that comes from God. Often the Lord uses the most difficult circumstances to test our love. Your level of faith will surface when your life falls apart. Job in the Old Testament knew this:

*"I go east, but He is not there. I go west, but I cannot find Him. I do not see Him in the north, for He is hidden. I look to the south, but He is concealed. But He knows where I am going. And when He tests me, I will come out as pure as gold" (Job 23:8-10).*

2. God will never forsake you. God showed up for Job and Yahweh's presence enabled Job to declare: "I had only heard of you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes" (Job 48:5). Think of a time you were separated from God. How (where and in what condition) did the LORD find you?

John Newton penned: "I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see." How is life-transformation proof of Christ's resurrection power? (For living examples of life transformation, re-visit the remarkable stories of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-31) and Christ calling Peter in Mark 1:16-18, Matthew 16:17-19, John 21)

Because the words in the New Testament are written on behalf of the Lord, when Paul writes the church in Rome, it is as though Christ Himself is standing before early Christ-followers, pleading (beseeching): "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him" (Romans 12:1).

3. Can you imagine the Lord Himself standing before you, *pleading*:

"My Child, \_\_\_\_\_, offer yourself to me – alive and alert to my plan. I love you. I have given my life for you. And I have so much I want to do *for* you and *through* you! There are many people around you who need to know me. I died for you, would you live for me?"

What would it take for you to willingly offer yourself to God as a 'living and holy sacrifice' and to begin aligning your life with His will 'which is good and pleasing and perfect?' (Romans 12:2b). Do you trust God with *you*? Do you trust God to use you to reach others within your circle of influence? Are you willing to lay yourself on the altar?



In the Old Testament, an offering was placed on the altar by the priest and remained on the altar until it was completely burned up. The animal chosen for sacrifice was innocent and had no say in offering itself. But you do. The blood of Jesus has made you innocent (1 Peter 1:19) and God is pleading with you to offer yourself as a 'living and holy sacrifice' – in other words, commit yourself completely to the point of dying to self! (see Mark 8:34-38, Galatians 2:20-21, and Colossians 3:1-3).

- 4. Jesus offered Himself to God so that lost people could be found. He expects no less of us. Only in dying can we be truly reborn. "The LORD is God, shining upon us. Take the sacrifice and bind it with cords on the altar" (Psalm 118:27). Like flesh hooks in the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant, what is keeping your sacrifice on the altar? Do you desire to offer yourself completely to the Lord?

*"For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in His steps. He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when He was insulted, nor threaten revenge when He suffered. He left His case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in His body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By His wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls" (1 Peter 2:21-25).*

**Text:** I Peter 1: 13-25 & I Peter 2: 1-3

### PLAIN TRUTH:

\_\_\_\_\_ Christianity is when your outside  
\_\_\_\_\_ your inside  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**How can we get our outside behavior to match our inside faith?**

- 1. A New \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. A Transformed \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Transformed \_\_\_\_\_

**One Year Bible Reading**  
Nov. 24: Ezekiel 47:1-48:35, 1 Peter 2:11-3:7, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 28:12-13  
Nov. 25: Daniel 1:1-2:23, 1 Peter 3:8-4:6, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 28:14  
Nov. 26: Daniel 2:24-3:30, 1 Peter 4:7-5:14, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 28:15-16  
Nov. 27: Daniel 4:1-37, 2 Peter 1:1-21, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 28:17-18  
Nov. 28: Daniel 5:1-31, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Psalm 119:113-128, Proverbs 28:19-20  
Nov. 29: Daniel 6:1-28, 2 Peter 3:1-18, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 28:21-22  
Nov. 30: Daniel 7:1-28, 1 John 1:1-10, Psalm 119:153-176, Proverbs 28:23-24