



## Group Leader Guide

### “What’s Most Important?” – Famous Last Words

#### March 14-15, 2020

#### Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

#### // Message Summary

Lead Pastor, **Jim Burgen**, continues our series **Famous Last Words**. This week, we focus on Jesus’ words from **John 19:26-27** when He instructs His disciple, John, to take care of his mother after His death. Using this story and the story of His first miracle at the wedding of Cana (**John 2:1-12**), we see how Jesus cares about the daily problems in our lives, even in the midst of His overall mission of saving the world.

#### // Biblical Context

**John 19:26-27**: It was not (and is still not) uncommon in cultures like 1st-century Israel for a husband to be much older than his wife. Therefore, it was also not uncommon for a wife to be widowed. It is traditionally believed that Joseph, Mary’s husband, died sometime in Jesus’ teen years. Since widows did not usually have the means to support themselves, the responsibility would fall to the oldest son. In this case, that was Jesus. Jewish people saw this as following the 5th commandment, found in **Exodus 20:12**: “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” So, even in His last minutes, Jesus is still following the commandments of God, even the one that ironically promised long life. It would be expected that once Jesus died, His mother’s care would then pass to the other members of His family. After all, Mary

and Joseph had other sons (one of which was a man named James, who later wrote the book of James in the New Testament). Why then did Jesus give her into the care of his disciple, John, a non-family member? It is probable that Jesus’ brothers did not become believers until after His resurrection. **John 7:5** tells us that His brothers did not believe in Him, and then there is the fact that they weren’t even at the crucifixion. John, however, was there, believed that Jesus was the Christ, and had a very close, brother-like relationship with Jesus. Her spiritual welfare was given priority over cultural family ties. So, not only was this act honoring to his widowed mother, but it was also honored John. He elevated John to the status of being a family member and passed the very important responsibility of caring for His mother to him.

**// Biblical Background: The Wedding at Cana - John 2:1-12** (*from the Group Leader Guide published for the weekend of September 28-29, 2019*)

**Cana**: The most likely site for this small town is the site of **Khirbet Qana**, located about 8 miles north of Nazareth, Jesus’ hometown. This would have been a long walk, but close enough for the hosts of the wedding to know Jesus and His family well enough to invite them.

**Weddings**: Jewish wedding celebrations at

this time could last days (ideally seven). People would come for some or all of it, so gauging how much supplies were needed could be tricky. This explains why they may have run out of wine. However, the stigma that would have come with that would have still been devastating to this family had they not found a solution quickly.

**Stone Jars:** The stone jars mentioned were specifically for Jewish rites of purification. They would use the water stored in these to become “ceremonially clean.” Nothing else was allowed to be stored in them except this ceremonial water. Jesus technically violated custom by using these jars to create the wine. Since the wedding hosts would have suffered damage to their honor and dignity by running out of wine, this can be seen to represent Jesus as valuing the honor of the host above even ritual purity customs. So, Jesus made an abundance of really good wine, and He did it not only to provide for everyone there but also to bring value and dignity to someone in need.

### // In Preparation

It has been a strange week, to say the least. Be prepared for a lot of conversation about coronavirus, the state of our world, and other related topics in group this week. I believe that the talk this weekend is very relevant to what is going on in the world, so be willing to apply what you learn directly to these conversations. God cares about each and every single person in the midst of a world pandemic. God cares about you and has not become distracted by what is going on in the world. Take some time and think about that! Also, take some time at the beginning of group to pray for those affected by the coronavirus, for our national and world leadership to handle it well, and for wisdom in dealing with everything in each of your lives.

### // References

Keener, Craig S Ph.d. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Currid, John D., and David W. Chapman. *ESV Archaeology Study Bible: English Standard Version*. Crossway Books, 2017.

GotQuestions.org. “Why Did Jesus Entrust Mary to the Apostle John Instead of to His Brothers?” *GotQuestions.org*, 24 May 2017, [www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Mary-John.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Mary-John.html).



## Group Discussion Questions

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#### // Bible References

John 19:26-27, John 2:1-12, 1 Timothy 5:7-8

#### // Message Screenshots

- We’re not invited to a trial in Heaven. We’re invited to a party!
- Real change happens AFTER we’re saved. Not before.
- We have the kind of God who doesn’t just care about the big, huge, eternal things.
- We have the kind of God who cares about the small, everyday things as well.
- It was important to that newly married couple. It was important to his mom. So, because THEY were important to him, so was their problem.
- We have the kind of God who cares about us.
- So, we have the kind of God who cares about our problems (big and small).
- 1. God first. 2. Family second. 3. Everything else.
- I might be immediately forgiven, but it’s going to take a long time to heal.
- You have to change your mind.
- You have to do something better than what you’ve been doing.
- Do you think that it’s possible that you matter enough to God that He really does care about your problems (big and small)?
- Do the most important people in your life know that they matter to you and that you care about their problems (big and small)?

#### // Community Questions

1. Does everyone have toilet paper at their house?
2. How did you serve someone this week that you usually wouldn’t have?

#### // Core Questions

1. What problem in your life do you think isn’t big enough for God to care about?
2. Read **1 Peter 5:7** and **Psalms 55:22**. What hope do these verses provide you regarding God and His desire to help you?
3. If you were to start believing that God cares about even the smallest issues in your life, how would it make a difference in the way that you see and approach God?
4. What is one big thing and one little thing in your life that you can be praying about this week?

5. Do the most important people in your life know that they matter to you and that you care about their problems, both big and small? Why or why not?
6. What area of your life tends to take priority over the people closest to you, intentionally or unintentionally?
7. What are the consequences of that?
8. What can you do this week to show the people closest to you that they are at the top of your priority list?

### // Challenge

The world changed this week, at least temporarily. God cares deeply about this pandemic, the people affected by it, and the people in leadership making decisions on how to respond. In the midst of pandemics and world panic, however, He cares equally, if not more, about you personally. No less than He did last week, or the week before that. There is nothing in this world that can overwhelm God. His attention has no limits. He can handle it all, no matter how much it is. Our attention, however, does have limits. We can get overwhelmed by a single topic while everything else falls by the wayside. That could be the coronavirus this week, but last week it was probably something else. The challenge this week is simple: actually do what you said you were going to do in questions 4 and 8. Make a commitment to the group that you are going to do them. Set aside time to pray for your big and small thing. Follow through with what you said you were going to do to show the people closest to you that they are at the top of your priority list. What you actually pray for and do may be different for everyone, but be ready to come back next week and check-in with the group on whether you did it or not!