



Group Leader Guide “Family Takes Sacrifice” – The Perfect Li(f)e November 16-17, 2019

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

Ben’s up for the second week of **The Perfect Li(f)e**. This week Ben will focus on the idea that we run into problems when we believe the lie that this whole family thing should be easy. Once we convince ourselves that family is easy, the most damaging result of that lie is that we’ll eventually stop putting in the work. Ben will uncover the idea that Jesus has a better way to do this family thing, but it starts with us understanding that family isn’t easy and the expectation that family takes work. And according to Jesus, it takes a very specific kind of work called sacrifice.

// Biblical Context

Matthew 20:25: The general consensus of Jewish people during this time (1st century AD) was that the governments and class systems of gentiles (non-jews) were more tyrannical than their own culture. Kings were tyrants and governments were dictatorships. Even though they didn’t have a legitimate king anymore, their view of Israelite kingship had much more of a moral element than the kings of non-Jewish empires and communities.

Matthew 20:26-28: With that said, the role reversal of servant and master that Jesus is proposing would have been revolutionary even to his Jewish audience. They may have been reminded of the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which included a role-reversal of

slaves and masters in Roman society, where the masters actually served their slaves dinner. But this festival was temporary and possibly more tongue-in-cheek than anything else. In other words, there wasn’t much goodwill exchanged between the slaves and masters; it served more as a reminder to the slaves what they usually had to miss out on. What Jesus is proposing is a legitimate role-reversal where in order to become the greatest, you needed to become a slave or servant, much like He did, both in His life and death. This is also a reference to **Isaiah 53**, which is a prophetic description of “the suffering servant,” which we know now was describing Jesus, Himself. These words describe the suffering of Jesus and how it benefitted others while also being the means of His greatness:

“¹¹After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge *my righteous servant will justify many*, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹²*Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*” (**Isaiah 53:11-12**, emphasis mine)

// In Preparation

You are the leader of your group. But according to Jesus, that does not mean you get to “lord it over them.” You are called to serve those entrusted to you. This is your primary responsibility in leading them. John 13 tells the story of Jesus putting His own words into action. He spontaneously began washing the disciples’ dirty, disgusting feet. When they complained that He shouldn’t be doing this, He responded by saying that He was doing this as an example for them to follow when they went out in their ministry later. They were to serve the people they were leading. Now, I am not suggesting that you wash everyone’s feet in your group. You absolutely can, but that had more cultural relevance back then because everyone wore sandals and the roads were all dirty. It was actually a job for slaves. But what is something that you can do for your group that is sacrificial? How could you serve them before the group semester is up?

// References

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



Discussion Questions

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// Bible References

Matthew 20:25-28; Philippians 2:3-8

// Community Questions

1. What is your favorite convenience that makes your life easier? (for example: Clicklist, fast food, Netflix, dishwasher, etc.)

// Core Questions

1. Do you wish that family life was easier?
2. What were your expectations going into life with a family?
3. What is a consistent point of tension or conflict in your family?
4. Despite the perceived difficulty of it, what needs to be addressed in your family? This could be with your spouse, children, in-law, parents, or anyone else in your family circle.
5. What would serving and/or sacrificing for your family look like?
6. What is one thing you could sacrifice for your family in order to grow closer to them this week?

// Challenge

We are often paralyzed by doing anything to better the lives of our families because we tend to look at the whole situation as a whole. A broken or dysfunctional family is a massive issue to tackle, so oftentimes, we just avoid doing anything about it. It is just too big of a mountain to climb. However, the longest and most rewarding journeys always start with one simple thing: a step. You don't have to think of something to sacrifice for your family that will magically fix everything immediately. You just need to take the first step. And to be honest, it may seem like it backfires at first. It often turns out that once we begin working on something in our lives, it seems to get worse before it gets better. Family issues are no exception. This is because once we become aware of an issue and our previous inability to do anything about it, our most sincere efforts just don't seem like they're enough. We so badly want improvement, but we are rusty and unpracticed. So, now we don't only have the issue at hand, but also our jankety efforts to fix them. *This will pass with time!* Just continue to make an effort to address the issues in your family. And don't forget to pray that God will go with you and give you the strength to do what needs to be done!