

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments, as you feel necessary, to fit your group’s dynamics.

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

September 14, 2025

- What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend’s message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

1) Understanding Righteous vs. Sinful Anger: The sermon describes righteous anger as indignation over evil but warns that it can quickly become sinful if it turns to bitterness. Drawing from Ephesians 4:26-27, how can we practically distinguish between righteous anger and sinful anger in our daily lives? Share an example from your experience.

2) The Heart of the 6th Commandment: Jesus elevates “You shall not murder” beyond physical acts to include anger, insults, and calling someone a “fool” (Matthew 5:21-22). How does this teaching challenge the way we view conflicts or disagreements? What does it reveal about God’s concern for our inner attitudes rather than just outward behavior?

3) Seeking Reconciliation Proactively: In verses 23-24, Jesus instructs us to leave our gift at the altar and seek reconciliation if a brother has something against us. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the offender’s responsibility to initiate reconciliation, even if fault lies on both sides? How might this apply to a situation in your life where reconciliation feels difficult or one-sided?

4) Replacing Bitterness with Forgiveness: The sermon uses Ephesians 4 to illustrate “putting off” bitterness and “putting on” kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation. What are some practical steps we can take to replace negative heart attitudes (like bitterness toward a family member, coworker, or political figure) with positive actions? How does remembering God’s forgiveness toward us (Ephesians 4:32) motivate this change?

5) Prioritizing Relationships Over Religious Acts: Jesus teaches that outward worship is meaningless without right relationships with God and others (referencing Matthew 15:8-9 and 1 John 4:7-8). In what ways might we be tempted to prioritize “religious duties” (like attending church or serving) over resolving conflicts? How can we ensure our worship reflects a heart reconciled to both God and people?

6) Christ-Like Compassion in Division: In a culturally or politically divided time, how can we cultivate compassion instead of bitterness toward those we disagree with? What role does prayer play in this process (Matthew 5:43-44, James 5:16)?

7) Urgency in Reconciliation: Verses 25-26 use the illustration of settling with an accuser before court to emphasize acting quickly to avoid escalation. Why is urgency important in dealing with anger or unresolved conflicts (connecting to Ephesians 4:26-27 and Genesis 4:6-7)? Have you ever delayed reconciliation and regretted it? What might "not letting the sun go down on your anger" look like practically?

8) Application to Community and Church Life:

Read and discuss the following quote.

- *True worship is not enhanced by better music, better prayers, better architecture, or even better preaching. True worship is enhanced by better relationships between those who come to worship.* - **John MacArthur**

The sermon stresses that true worship is enhanced by better relationships within the church. How can our church community support one another in pursuing reconciliation and guarding against bitterness? What steps could we take as a group to foster this?

9) Personal Conviction and Response: The sermon ends with a call to love God and love others, ensuring right relationships as a priority. Is there anyone in your life (a spouse, sibling, friend, or church member) in whom bitterness or unresolved issues exist? What one action will you take this week to seek reconciliation, inspired by this passage (Matthew 5:23-25)?