



GRACE GROUP LEADER'S MESSAGE GUIDE

Leader note: This Message Guide is intended to help you facilitate discussion with your Grace Group. You can use the guide exactly as it is, ignore some of it, or add to it. We hope you view this guide as a flexible teaching tool, and not a rigid teaching task.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 9th

Please review the group leader announcements on the group resources page (www.gracefellowship.cc/groupresources). There are new resources listed, and a new calendar.

ICEBREAKER QUESTION

What actor or actress would you want to play you in a movie made about your life?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO BY TYLER PIATT

NOT COMING DOWN - The Power Source (Scripture: *John 15:1-11*)

1. What captures your interest the most lately? What's something fun you're connecting with? i.e. a new tv show, a new hobby, your kids sports season, a family activity etc.
2. What's something you have been connected with in the past, but now have drifted away from?
3. Why is it hard to stay connected to something (relationships, passions, spiritual disciplines) over a long period of time?
4. When's the last time you've evaluated yourself for something? Why can it be hard to do this sometimes?
5. Read John 15:1-11 as a group. What's the significance of the word remain (or abide in some translations) appearing so many times in this passage?
6. What helps you "remain" in him? What, whether an inherently good or bad thing, tends to pull you away from a healthy relationship with God?
7. Examine yourself. Where do you really feel like you're at currently in your spiritual walk with Jesus? How are you doing with letting God be your true power source?
8. What do you want to be known for? How is this shaped by your strength in connection with Jesus?
9. What practices can you start to do (or continue to do) that you know will strengthen how close you are to God?
10. How can you invite those in your Grace Group to help you make the next best step towards remaining in Christ?

ACTION STEP

The action step out of the weekend message was to "play your part" when it comes to connecting with the power source of Jesus. What does this mean for you individually?

SHEPHERDING / CARE / PRAYER

Here's a few suggestions to bring out the spiritual gifts of your group members:

- Study the gifts. Because many people who join a small group are already Christians, group leaders often assume their members already have a strong knowledge of their

own spiritual gifts. In reality, many Christians have only a vague knowledge of what their spiritual gifts are and how they influence our lives as Christians. It's very possible that the majority of your group members are unaware of their spiritual gifts.

For that reason, consider studying the spiritual gifts as a group. There are a number of published curriculum options that are helpful in identifying the different gifts and highlighting their application. There are also many "gift inventories" available that will allow your group members to determine some of their specific gifts.

If you choose to lead your group in a study of the spiritual gifts, be honest and up-front about your motivations. Encourage everyone to engage the study with the goal of identifying their gifts and discussing ways to use those gifts for God's kingdom.

- Initiate a spiritual conversation. When you feel like one or more group members could use some encouragement or affirmation regarding their spiritual gifts, invite them to talk about it. If appropriate, ask them to join you for a meal or for coffee. Don't ambush your group members by suddenly turning a normal conversation into a spiritual discussion. Instead, be direct about your goals when you initiate the meeting: "I'd like to talk about some of the ways I've seen God at work in your life."
- Use "I see" language. Some group members may feel a bit put off if you make definitive statements about their character and personality. For example, telling someone "You have the gift of service, and you need to use it in our group" may not be the best approach during your conversation. While such a statement may be accurate, it can come across as invasive or overly personal.

Using "I see" or "I hear" language allows you to be direct in your observations without crossing a line. For example: "I see how your eyes light up when we talk about serving our community. What would you think about leading the group in a service project?" Or: "I've heard you talk about the different conversations you've had with your neighbors. Would you be willing to lead some evangelism training for our group?"

Taking this approach has the side benefit of letting your group members know that you've noticed God working in their lives, and that you care about their spiritual health.

- Keep an open mind. You may come into the conversation with several ideas for how your group member might use his or her spiritual gifts to benefit your community. However, don't hold on too tightly to your own plans. Your group members will find more success using their gifts if they're spurred on by their own passions and motivations. Be open to group members applying their gifts in ways you hadn't considered.

(article: Call Out the Spiritual Gifts in Your Group Members by Sam O'Neal. smallgroups.com)