

CROSSROADS BIBLE CHURCH

GROWTH GROUP CURRICULUM

May 19, 2019

“CITY OF GOD” - Week 2

For more information or to join a Growth Group, please visit our Growth Group page online at cbclife.org/groups or call the church office at 408.288.4115.

QUICK REVIEW

For those who weren't there or even those who didn't understand it very well it will help them to get acquainted with the text and topic. These questions are also designed to be “softball” questions in order to get people to engage and participate.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

This is an opportunity to clarify the teaching for those who may not have understood it. This can also be a jumping off point for great discussion. Sometimes groups don't get past this question and that's ok! Remember, you want to “scratch where it itches” so don't feel the need to rush past this.

2. What is one thing from Sunday's message you are likely to remember two weeks from now?

MY STORY

1. Pastor Jeff talked about us being either older brothers or younger brothers and the Gospel is about the God who comes after us, saves us, and welcomes us despite our sin. Looking back at your life, would you consider your past and present more of a younger brother or older brother?

Utilize this opportunity to share the testimonies of your group members, it will be great to get to know the spiritual stories of your group. Celebrate what God has done for each member and worship Christ for His grace. The gist of this question is to get people to wrestle with our tendencies of sin. Was our past defined by legalism or by sinful living?

DIGGING DEEPER

Read aloud Luke 18:9–14 and then work through the questions below.

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10** “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ **13** “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ **14** “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

DIGGING DEEPER (cont.)

1. Look at what the Pharisee says about himself in verses 11 and 12. Is the Pharisee a hypocrite? Discuss.

2. What does the Pharisee understand righteousness to be and how to achieve it?

These questions really highlight the tendency of those in legalism to judge those “younger brother” types in their experience. He doesn’t understand righteousness as a gift from God, he sees it more as something to be earned and praised for. As long as he maintains the letter of the law, he keeps his righteousness. He forgets the grace of God and instead focuses on his own actions.

3. The tax collector does not actually say what you see in the English translation of verse 13, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” He uses a definite article in the Greek. He says, “God, have mercy on me, the sinner.” What can we learn about repentance from the attitude of the tax collector?

This is about making his sins personal and understanding his own place in the economy of God. His problem is not “sinful nature” or the fact that he was born a man and “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” He understands how he personally has offended God because of his sin. When sin becomes a personal element to repent of, the Gospel becomes real in people’s lives. Jesus certainly died for the world (John 3:16), but He sacrificed for the individual.

4. Pastor and author John Stott writes, ‘Justification’ is a legal term, borrowed from the law courts. It is the exact opposite of ‘condemnation’. ‘To condemn’ is to declare somebody guilty; ‘to justify’ is to declare him ... righteous. In the Bible it refers to God’s act of unmerited favor by which He puts a sinner right with Himself, not only pardoning or acquitting him, but accepting him and treating him as righteous. Jesus says the tax collector went home “justified” before God. Why? What does this passage teach us about justification?

Use this time to talk about grace, God’s unmerited favor. Talk about the elements of God’s grace, worship Him for how astounding His gifts of grace are. If justice were served, we’d be declared guilty and deserving of separation from God in hell. But justification through Christ means we inherit the blessing reserved for Jesus. It should lead us to stand in awe of God’s grace.