



Spring 2022 // WEEK 5

Life Group Questions

Real Change: Getting to the heart of it. // May 21/22, 2022

A Heart of Gentleness // 1 Peter 3:8-17

Introduction

Welcome to the final week of the Spring Life Group Session. After this week, we will take a break for the summer. Even though groups will not be officially meeting, your Life Group will probably gather several times over the summer socially or maybe you've looked at the **Summer Together Booklet** and picked out something to do together this summer!

Two more things for this final week:

1. If you haven't celebrated with your Party Poppers, take a few moments to do so!
2. The Life Groups Team has a very short survey that we'd love for you to fill out. Please take about 5 minutes **during** your group meeting to tell us how participating in a Life Group has influenced your walk with Jesus. Here is a link to the survey:

<https://forms.office.com/r/duSTX8uZH0> Or use this QR Code:



Outrage and anger are prevalent in our world today. Not only are they prevalent, but they are somewhat valued; portrayed in a way that shows passion, vibrancy and purpose. That's not all bad, is it? God's Word is clear, we are to set aside anger and pursue gentleness. As we continue the Real Change series, we take a moment to notice the way of gentleness and to (hopefully) find it to be of much higher value than a heart of anger.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over the questions below and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

Here are some suggestions to get your conversation started:

1. What are the most important qualities in friends?
2. If you were given a pill that would rid you of anger, would you take it? Why or why not?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you

 - 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) In what ways did the sermon this week challenge your thoughts on anger and gentleness?

- 2) Throughout the first letter of Peter, he reminds believers that we should live differently because we are strangers to this world. Christians should remain gentle even when surrounded by anger and persecution. Read 1 Peter 3:15. **According to this verse what is one way that Christians can be different in a world filled with anger? How is gentleness involved?**

In the ESV translation, this verse begins by saying *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy*. **Do you see gentleness as a way that you can honor Christ? How does this mindset change your interactions with others?**

- 3) Read Matthew 11:28-29 to get a glimpse of Jesus Christ's own heart of gentleness. Take a moment to have everyone in the group contribute their answers to the following questions:
How does Jesus describe Himself? What does this teach me about who He is?

How does this aspect of God's character change my view of self?

What should I do in response? Perhaps share the Personal Spiritual Exercise (detailed below) you are choosing to participate in this week.

- 4) Read 1 Peter 3:8-9. **What are the potential ways to be gentle that are mentioned in these verses?** Make a list. (hint: Peter identifies eight ways to extend gentleness).

How did you experience any of the eight listed ways of gentleness in your life this week? Were you the giver or receiver of gentleness?

Which gesture of gentleness proves to be the most challenging for you right now? How can your life group pray with you in this and be an encouragement to you?

- 5) It is important to realize that pursuing gentleness does not mean we will no longer experience feelings of anger. In the life of the believer, anger will always be one of the great troubles in this world. Peter reminds us of this by quoting Psalm 34 in his letter as an encouragement. **What does it look like to feel anger but respond in gentleness?**

Share of a time when you chose to pursue gentleness in a moment when anger seemed more natural. What was the benefit of choosing to be gentle?

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts.

1. **Sitting With God** – solitude and silence; coming to stillness (body, mind, spirit). Spend 15 minutes in silence, processing your thoughts on gentleness and anger. Advance through this exercise in the following way:

Minutes 1-5: Lift your thoughts *upward* as you praise God for how He is kind in His gentleness. Remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:28-30.

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Minutes 5-10: Turn your thoughts *inward* to identify if gentleness compels you in your relationships. Do you desire to be gentle in your interactions with others? Be honest with yourself and God. Ask Him to help you set aside anger and pursue gentleness.

Minutes 10-15: Extend your thoughts *outward* to pray for a person or interaction that you would like to move forward with gentleness. Perhaps anger, sarcasm and cynicism have lingered in many of your interactions with others. Pray for wisdom in how to see them the way Christ sees them.

2. **Soaking In The Word** – Engage with Psalm 34 multiple times throughout the week. Read to listen, feel, experience the Words washing over you. Resist study and parsing the psalm. The point is not to gain “head knowledge” but a stirring in the heart as the Holy Spirit brings the Word to life in you.