

# GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

“Encouragement is Future Happiness” (1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. **Youth Group** is starting this Wednesday from 7:00 till 9:00 PM at the church. All children between 6th and 12th grade are welcome to come! We will require face coverings and a form to be filled out. If you have any questions, please email Bill Harrison at [students@churchatbergen.org](mailto:students@churchatbergen.org).
2. **“Walk-in’s Welcome”**: As a reminder, please pre-register for Sunday mornings whenever possible, this will reserve your seat. But if Sunday morning comes along and you didn’t register, walk-ins are always welcome as capacity allows. You will simply fill out a registration form at the check-in desk.
3. **Member Gathering**: our bi-annual member gathering will be held Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup> from 4:00pm-5:30pm. Be sure to register in the email sent out on Monday.

**FOCUS:** the most important thing this month is for you and your group to spend sufficient time getting to know each other and get reacquainted with your friendships.

## DISCUSSION:

1. Icebreaker: see the Leader Resource page (<https://www.churchatbergen.org/group-leader-resources>) and pick an icebreaker from the link called: “75 Icebreaker Questions for Small Groups.”
2. Was there anything that really stood out to you in this past week’s sermon? What was it? Why did that particular aspect impress itself upon you?
3. One minor point at the beginning of the sermon was from Paul’s phrase in verse 17, “we were torn away from you... *in person not in heart*.” The point stated in the sermon was: *absence of presence does not equal absence of heart*. What does this personally mean to you? In what way might this be important for us to remember as a church and as a group?
4. The main point of the sermon was about how encouragement is the way in which we invest in and increase our future happiness when Christ returns. This point came from Paul’s statement in chapter 3, verse 20, “For you are our glory and our joy.” What were your thoughts and feelings regarding this point? In what way does this change the way you personally view encouragement?
5. There were 2 “schemes of Satan” mentioned in the sermon: 1) Satan clogs the arteries of faith to block the blood flow of encouragement, 2) Satan sows seeds of suspicion towards Jesus in the fertile soil of affliction. Which of these made the biggest impression upon you personally? Why? What will change in light of that?
6. Pastor McKinney used a Chick-Fil-A illustration this past Sunday. Do you remember what it was for? In what way was it personally clarifying, helpful, and even freeing for you personally? What are the implications of this for you in your endeavors to encourage people in the church?
7. In what way does the gospel of Jesus Christ (his death for our sins and resurrection for our new life) empower and free us to live out this idea of “Encouragement is Future Happiness”?

**Prayer:** for the church that we would all take up the call to encourage one another, especially that we would see it not as a chore, but as a pursuit of our future happiness in Christ.