**Focus this week:** the first month of Growth Groups should always focus on fellowship more than anything. Fellowship is the glue that holds the group together. Be sure to spend plenty of time getting to know each other and grow in comfortability with one another. This is why it helps to have icebreakers, food, music, etc. at the beginning of your meeting. This will pay dividends in the later months.

**FELLOWSHIP TIME (15 minutes)**

Be sure to plan out some way to implement casual fellowship time as people come to your group. You can have snacks, drinks, nametags, music, etc.

**STARTING OFF THE NIGHT (15 minutes)**

After the fellowship time at the beginning of your meeting, have everyone find their seats and start off with an icebreaker. You can use one of the icebreakers from the leader resource page found here: <https://lifewayresearch.com/2020/02/19/75-icebreaker-questions-for-church-small-groups/>

**Pow’s and Wow’s**: After you do the icebreaker, one thing you can do to start your group off each week is called “Pow’s and Wow’s”. Have each person go around and share a “pow” (a low moment from the past week) and a “wow” (a high point moment from the last week). This can also be a great way to learn how you can pray for one another.

**DISCUSSION (45 minutes)**

Start discussion by saying, “This past Sunday we started to get into the specifics of the renewed mission of Church at Bergen. Although every local church exists to glorify God, all must answer the question of how they will do that as a church. Church at Bergen will glorify God by ***pursuing lives of wholehearted love for Jesus Christ and our neighbor.*** This week we learned about the significance of the first word: *pursuing.* We learned that the Christian life is an all-the-time, all-consuming, and all-absorbing pursuit of growing in greater joy in Christ and love for Christ.”

1. Before we get into the specifics of the sermon text in Philippians 3, was there anything from last week’s sermon that either encouraged, challenged, or helped you grow in love for Jesus Christ?
2. Have someone read Philippians 3:2-21 then you can say, “Paul talks about the pursuit of Christ in verses 12-17, but before he talks about the pursuit he talks about the free gift of righteousness you receive by faith in Christ in verses 7-9. Why do you think it is so important for this to be the order of the Christian life: first, you receive the gift of righteousness, then second, you pursue greater love for Christ? How would Christianity be different if that order was switched?
3. There were four reasons listed in the sermon for why we pursue. They are listed below. Have each person discuss which of the four reasons the Lord used most during the sermon. Have each person explain why it spoke to them personally.
   1. ***We pursue, because we are not perfect.***(“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect…” Phil. 3:12)
   2. ***We pursue, because we have already been pursued****.* (“I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” Phil. 3:12)
   3. ***We pursue, because we are tempted to settle****.* (“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:13-14)
   4. ***We pursue, because it’s what anyone can do****.* (“Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.” Phil. 3:17)

**PRAYER (15 minutes)**

This is one of the most important things you can do for growing spiritually in your group. Always be sure to leave plenty of time to pray together as a group. ***Go around and have everyone share where they need prayer, then take plenty of time to pray for each person.***