

### GOAL FOR NOVEMBER: *Finish Well!*

This is officially the last month of the Fall semester of Growth Groups. Make sure you end the group well. This entails the following:

- Frequently reminding the group November is the final month.
- Scheduling a holiday get together (Christmas party, New Years, etc.)
- Talking to your co-leader about future plans with the group.

### BEGINNING THE NIGHT: *Opening Prayer and Icebreaker*

**Reflecting on the semester:** Have each person go around and share one way they have experienced spiritual growth over the past 3 months. Then have people share how they hope to continue that growth through the winter.

### DISCUSSING THE SERMON:

**SAY:** “The big point from this week’s sermon was our calling as Christians to endure unjust shame and suffering. This is a tough calling, but the gospel is the very thing that will help us endure such a high calling for Jesus.”

1. Before getting into the specifics of the sermon, what were your initial reactions and impressions of the sermon or the workbook?

2. The first major point of the sermon was: *You are called by God to endure unjust shame and suffering for Christ.* When was the last time you had to endure something unjust? How did you respond?

Give people plenty of time to process how they responded. How people respond differ all over the place, so you may want to have people notice the different ways that people respond. You could follow up with having people process the different kinds of reactions to unjust suffering. You may even want to flip the question and ask about JUST consequences they have had to endure.

3. One thing said in the sermon was that this calling is not “graduate school Christianity, but elementary school Christianity.” What are the implications of this for the Christian life?

Implications of this could be the following: 1) every single Christian is called to endure this, 2) God works in each of us to empower us to endure it, 3) none of us can use this as an excuse to not be vulnerable about our faith, 4) you don’t have to be a Christian for a “long time” before you are called to experience and endure this.

4. The second major point of the sermon was: *The main roadblock to this calling is the fear of our egos being wounded.* Would you agree with this? Why or why not?

It is totally permissible for people to disagree with the preacher! You can even tell people that Pastor McKinney said you are free to disagree with him ;) The essence of this point was to attempt to boil all of the possible reasons down to one major one. Other possible “roadblocks” could be indifference to the lost, over-busyness with work and life, and simply the wrong belief that being vulnerable about your faith is not important. You may want to end the discussion by asking, can any of these alternative “roadblocks” be caused by the deeper root of ego?

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There will be **no Worship & Prayer** next week.

Growth Groups are officially ending in November. They will officially pick up again on **Sunday, March 1.**

**Winter Classes** are kicking off the second week of January. Classes will run for 6 weeks. Registration will open in December.

1. **Book of Revelation** on Tuesday nights.
2. **Personal Evangelism** on Wednesday nights.

Next Sunday we are studying **1 Peter 3:1-7.** Complete the questions on **pages 46-55** before this upcoming Sunday.

### SERMON SUMMARY

You are called by God to endure unjust suffering for Christ. The main roadblock to this calling is the fear of your ego being wounded. The way to overcome this fear is not by shielding your ego but by surrendering your ego to Jesus. When we experience unjust shame and suffering, we are to fix our minds on two realities:

1. Jesus as the *example* for our suffering.
2. Jesus as the *expiation* for our sins.

### DEFINITIONS

**Ego:** a sense of personal dignity and who you are as an individual.

**Expiation:** the act of taking away sin and guilt.

## Growth Groups: Week 11 – “Submission is Mission – Part 2” (1 Peter 2:18-25)

5. In what way have you personally found the fear of a wounded ego hinder you from walking courageously as a disciple of Jesus?

There could be a multitude of responses here from people. Many people have a hard time with managing how they are perceived as a person in the workplace. Some people have really been wounded very deeply with traumatic experiences and don't want to go back there. For most of us, we have a hard time trusting God when we are being ostracized and alienated from personal connection with other people.

6. One of the things said in the sermon is, “We live in an intensely shielded and guarded society. We are all carrying around invisible shields to protect ourselves from being shamed and humiliated as a Christian.” What are the different forms that these “shields” take? Which do you find yourself using most?

Different shields could be: 1) PERFECTIONISM: we try to look perfect in every way as a Christian so that no one can criticize us for something we do wrong, 2) HUMOR: we try to make everything into a joke or even respond with something playful so no one takes things too seriously, 3) INTIMIDATION: we overpower people with our personalities so that no one challenges us or tries to attack us, 4) INTELLIGENCE/WIT: we try to prove how smart we are in showing off what we know and argue with people, 5) WITHDRAWAL: we stay out of everyone's way so they don't engage... THERE MAY BE MORE!

7. The final point of the sermon was: *The way to overcome this fear is not by shielding our egos, but by surrendering our egos to Jesus.* According to 1 Peter 2:21-23, how did Jesus model this for us? What aspect of Jesus' suffering for you personally empowers you to be vulnerable about who you are in Christ?

Some of the ways could be the following:

- 1) Jesus never sinned throughout the process of his unjust suffering.
- 2) Jesus never retaliated or threatened people when he suffered.
- 3) Jesus entrusted himself to his Father who judges justly, rather than taking matters into his own hands.

8. What do you think “surrendering your ego to Jesus” practically looks like for you in your particular season? Explain.

This question is very personal, so you may need to give people time and silence to process before answering. Be prepared to respond to the Spirit's leading if someone is personally going through a really hard time.

9. The final portion of the sermon talked about how we fix our minds, not only on Jesus as the *example* for our suffering, but also as the *expiation* for your sins. Why do you think it is essential to root all of our endurance upon Jesus as the expiation for our sins? In what way might we revert to legalism and self-righteousness in our endurance without *expiation*?

Many of us may be more “gritty” and “thick-skinned” than others. Thus, those of us who are like that may be tempted to pride because of our ability to endure unjust suffering in our OWN STRENGTH. Rooting our endurance of unjust suffering in Jesus' suffering for our sins reminds us that we do not deserve to entrust ourselves safely to him. It roots all of our endurance in the grace of God, rather than the works of man.

### CLOSING IN PRAYER (TIPS BELOW)

- Leave plenty of time to pray.
- Remind people to be patient as the group grows in comfortability praying together. It will take time. People should not feel forced to pray.
- Be careful you don't spend too much time taking “prayer requests.”
- When you start give people permission to sit in silence and pray only if they feel like God wants them to pray for something.
- Encourage people to not feel like they have to say long or sophisticated prayers, but simple ones are just acceptable to God.