

When Love Came to Town

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Vaughn Forest Church
Montgomery, AL

**For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.**

Isaiah 9:6-7

When Love Came to Town

God loves us so much that He is willing to reach out to us and have a relationship with us. He is willing to adopt us into His family...we just need to acknowledge Him and surrender to His will. We, out of love for Him, respond through thanking and praising Him and living and sharing Him with those around us. We have access to the God of the Universe, who sets us free, all because He chose for His Love to Come to Town.

LEADER LIFTER

In your Life Group, challenge people to build a relationship with Christ and to build relationships with each other. Additionally, encourage one another to Grow in Him, to Serve Him and to Serve each other and to Live Sent!

LIFE GROUP ESSENTIALS

- I will pray for my own family and the families of those in my group.
- I will faithfully prepare before each life group session.
- I will serve those in my group to the best of my ability and encourage loving relationships between all members of the group.
- We will covenant to be available to each other in times of stress or need, to encourage each other, and meet each other's specific needs.
- I will view myself as a facilitator/guide rather than a controller of my group.
- I will be loyal and supportive of my Pastor and church staff and encourage prayer for them.
- I will endeavor to keep the spirit of the group positive by squelching gossip with truth and avoiding a negative critical spirit.
- I will promote relational, theological, and value based unity in the church as well as a spirit of harmony.
- I will share openly and personally with the group in order to build up the group's closeness and intimacy.
- I will endeavor to handle conflict in the group with love and patience.
- I am committed to keeping things shared in the group confidential.
- I will support an apprentice so they can develop the skills to facilitate a group.
- I will encourage times of fellowship on a regular basis.
- I will lead an exemplary Christian lifestyle and will be a positive influence on the members of my group.
- I will not communicate or practice anything which is contrary to the core beliefs of VFC as expressed in the VFC Bylaws.
- I will notify our group facilitator or coach or pastor of acute conditions within the group requiring pastoral care or counseling.
- I have completed or will complete *Next Steps*; I have signed the VFC membership covenant, and I will encourage others to do the same.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This study guide is designed to engage your group in deep and meaningful conversation. For the Life Group Facilitator you most likely will spend more time listening than talking! At the end of each session, take notes and write down the prayer requests of your group.

Connect is designed to break the ice and allow for group members to engage in opening conversation. The questions are usually fairly simple so anyone can participate.

Grow is designed to take the group through the text and engage the group in a more robust conversation. The questions in this section will hopefully engage group members from all walks of life. You don't have to work through all the questions; just pick the ones that you think would best suit your group needs.

Share finishes the session with opportunities on how you are living your faith, applying the Word, and sharing Jesus. Live Sent!

Serve encourages group members to go out into the community to do the good that needs doing and love the ones that need loving.

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Session 1 // *Luke 17:11-19*

Session 2 // *Romans 8:15-17*

Session 3 // *Philippians 2:5-11*

Session 1 // Thanks

Connect

- **Are you sick? Spiritually? Physically? Emotionally? Do you need The Healer?**
- **Most of us have seen the devastating effects of a physical disease on a person we care about...or we have experienced it ourselves. How did you respond to this illness?**
- **If healing came, how did you respond? If healing didn't or doesn't come, what response would you have?**

Watch Corresponding Video; Read *Luke 17:11-19*

Grow

A Thankful Response To Being Healed (To The Gospel)

1. Show Others How You Were Healed. (v14)

Acknowledge God. Our brokenness is represented by the lepers. Just like the lepers, if we Acknowledge God, He is able to heal us. This recognition of God must come within ourselves to Him, then to others around us.

2. Praise God with a Loud Voice. (v15)

Praise God. Only one of the lepers, when he realized that he was healed, came back, and started praising God in a loud voice. We, too, should quickly Praise God for His ability to heal us.

3. Throw Ourselves at the Feet of Jesus. (v16)

Thank God. The one leper - a Samaritan - threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him. This grateful man was a Samaritan...the vilest of all heathen people, yet he knew to respond with Thankfulness. A thankful life leads others to Christ.

4. Rise up and Go Represent Christ. (v19)

Share God. Jesus told the leper, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." This foreigner was willing to tell all of that which Christ had done for him. Believers should be just as willing to Share God! Live Sent!

Share

1. Have you acknowledged your need for Jesus? Why or why not?
2. Are you like the one leper who came back and Acknowledged God? Or are you still waiting to be cleansed and healed? What are you waiting for?
3. Does our healing impact our response to God's will? Why or why not?
4. Is your natural response to Praise Him in the Hurts or to Curse Him? How can your response to Praise Him be strengthened?
5. Even a Samaritan was thankful...what does that say to us today?
6. Are you thankful for God's healing? Are you showing and telling others of your healing?
7. How can we show thankfulness to God for His Healing? His Provision? His Blessings? The Hurts in our Life?
8. As we read this passage, what should be our response to Jesus? Are we sharing with others our thankfulness for what God has done and is doing in our life? If you aren't, should you be?

Serve

Are you thankful for the Life Group that God has placed you in? He is using this group to heal you and to share the Gospel with those around you...at home, at work, at church, at recreation, at Life!

Session 2 // Adoption

Connect

- Have you ever taken care of someone or something that initially was not your responsibility? How did you initially feel? How did you feel after some time had passed? Did a bond of love and care develop? Why?
- Has someone ever cared for you that had no obligation to do so? How did it make you feel? How did you feel about them after time had passed? Did a bond of love and care develop? Why?
- Investing in the lives of others who are not our “responsibility” can be costly...Are you investing in the lives of others that God calls us to love? That God calls us to “adopt” into His family?

Watch Corresponding Video; Read *Romans 8:15-17*

Grow

Four Truths About God’s Adoption of Us

1. God’s Adoption for You was Costly.

Adoption is Priceless.

Christ laid down His life on a cross so that we would be made right with Him. He became sin...a curse for us...His love for us is priceless. (*Galatians 3:13*)

2. God’s Sign of Adoption is the Holy Spirit in You.

Adoption is Security.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to us...a person present in believers that God the Father sends to us as security knowing that we belong to Him. (*Romans 8:15-16*)

3. God’s Adoption for You was a Planned-Out Process.

Adoption is Everlasting.

God chose us to be in His family before the foundation of the world. He adopted us as sons through Jesus Christ for eternity. (*Ephesians 1:4-6*)

4. God’s Adoption of You Involved Your Legal Status to Change.

Adoption is Family.

We are no longer slaves to sin, but because of Jesus’ grace, love, and sacrifice, we are adopted as heirs. (*Galatians 4:4-7*) As His heir, we can call on Abba, “daddy,” at any time.

Share

1. Do you truly value what it cost God to bring believers into His family? How do you express your “adoption” to others around you?
2. Imagine if you can, would you be willing to give your one and only child as a sacrifice to adopt sinful, ungrateful people into your family? Why or why not?
3. How do you express that you are thankful God adopted you into His family? To your family? Fellow believers? Co-workers? Strangers?
4. How does the Holy Spirit reveal to you that you are securely His?
5. Do you know that God planned your adoption into the family of God? How do you know this?
6. God has a divine appointment for you to be a part of His family. You were not a mistake, you were not an accident, God has called you to be a Child of the King. Are you living like a Child of the King? Are you bringing others to meet the King?
7. If you are a part of the family of God, are you representing the family of God well? Is God prompting you to change some things?

Serve

Are you willing to tell others of the blessing of your being adopted into the family of God? How can you do this as a Life Group?

Session 3 // Live Life to the Full

Connect

- What does living life to the full mean to you?
- Do you fall prey to “following” the latest fad or craze? Why or why not?
- How often do you “deny” yourself of something? Why do you?

Watch Corresponding Video; Read *Philippians 2:5-11*

Grow

So How Is Life To Full Experienced?

1. A Daily Surrender to God’s Leading.

Surrender to God.

To be a disciple, Jesus tells believers that they must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. It’s His purpose over our preference. God rewards each person according to what they have done...seek His will and surrender to it. (Matthew 16:24-27)

2. You Serve Others the Way Christ has Served You.

Serve God.

We are called to love and serve others. It is through servant-leadership (putting others before ourselves) that we are Christ-like. (Mark 10:43-45)

3. Live with a Purpose to Advance the Kingdom of God.

Live for God.

The believer’s mission is to advance the Kingdom of God by fighting the good fight, by finishing the race, by keeping the faith, then we will receive a crown of righteousness. Stay focused on what God has called us to...To Build Lives that Honor God, to Connect with God and others, to Grow in our relationship with God, to Serve God and others, to Share God’s love. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

Share

1. What does living life to the full mean to God?
2. Are you willing to step outside of your normal way of life to live life to the full for God? What does this look like?
3. Is God asking you to reflect upon your life and change some things? How can you begin this process?

4. Is God calling you to deny something or someone, and follow Him? How are you willing to move forward with obeying God's prompting?
5. Is God asking you to Imitate Jesus more? Does God want you to serve others? How is God prompting you to draw closer to Him?
6. Why was Paul, despite numerous hardships, joyful? Are you joyful, despite hardships?
7. What is the "race" (the purpose) God has given you in His Kingdom? In His family? Are you pursuing the "win?" Are you running to win for Jesus? Why or Why not? Are you finishing strong? Or do you need to start a new race to advance the Kingdom of God? What "race" is God asking you to start?

Serve

Can you encourage one another in your Life Group to live life to the full by surrendering, serving, and living sent for God? What does that look like practically?