

New Testament Challenge Syllabus

LHCC Fall 2009 Growth Groups

Welcome to your Fall 2009 New Testament Challenge Growth Group. Your group will meet weekly beginning the week of October 4 through the week of December 22.

Have you actually ever read the New Testament? Most people haven't. This group is your big chance to read it through and learn more about your faith than ever before!

This Fall you and your Growth Group will have the opportunity to read through the New Testament in its entirety. Every day you will be reading several chapters from the New Testament (see the reading plan below). Then, on Sundays during the teaching will connect to the readings that you discuss, or have discussed, in your group.

Be sure to keep up with your reading and come to the group prepared to participate in discussion each week. When you read His Word God changes your life!

Below is a week by week syllabus for your group. Note that you will need to add in the dates that your group serves on Sundays and participates in its one missions event.

So, strap in and join the entire La Habra Christian Church Family on this spiritual adventure as we explore the New Testament together this fall!

NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE SYLLABUS

Monday, October 4 – Sunday, December 22

GG Week #1: Week of October 4 "The Challenge of the New Testament"
First Growth Group Meeting: Introductions, Group Orientation, Growth Group Covenants

GG Week #2: Week of October 11 "The Challenge of Radical Love"
Weekly Reading: Matthew 1-14 & Acts 1-21

GG Week #3: Week of October 18 "The Challenge of Generosity"
Weekly Reading: Matthew 15-28 & Acts 22-Romans 12

GG Week #4: Week of October 25 "The Challenge of Perseverance"
Weekly Reading: Mark 1-6 & Romans 13-1 Corinthians 2

GG Week #5: Week of November 1 "The Challenge of Servanthood"
Weekly Reading: Mark 15-Luke 7 & 1 Corinthians 14-Galatians 3

GG Week #6: Week of November 8 "The Challenge of Forgiveness"
Weekly Reading: Luke 8-Luke 14 & Galatians 4-Colossians 4

GG Week #7: Week of November 15 "The Challenge of Godliness"
Weekly Reading: Luke 15 – Luke 21 & 1 Thessalonians – 2 Timothy 4

GG Week #8: Week of November 22
(Groups Don't Meet Thanksgiving Week)

GG Week #9: Week of November 29 "The Challenge of Obedience"
Weekly Readings: Luke 22 - John 8 & Titus 1 – Hebrews 13

GG Week #10: Week of December 6 "The Challenge of Eternity"
Weekly Reading: John 9 – 20 & Hebrews 14-1 John 1-5

GG Week #11: Week of December 13 "The Challenge of Generosity"
Weekly Reading: 2 John 1 – Revelation 22

GG Week #12: Week of December 22
Growth Group Christmas Party Week

SERVICE TEAM DATES:

MY GG WILL PLAY TOGETHER:

MISSIONS PROJECT DATE:

La Habra Christian Church

Fall 2009 Growth Groups

Possible Itinerary for your 1st Growth Group Meeting

- **Allow people to arrive, talk, and snack – 15 min.**

- **Pray – 1 min.**

- **Have everyone introduce themselves and share what they do, where they are from, and why they decided to join the group – 10 min.**

- **Introductory game...have everyone tell 3 things about themselves (2 being true and 1 being false). Have everyone else try to guess which one is false. Any other interactive, fun game. – 10 min.**

- **Introduce the group study briefly. Hand out Growth Group syllabus and any other important information. Answer any questions – 15 minutes.**

- **Hand out the Growth Group Covenant. Read through the Growth Group Covenant carefully with the group. Explain the points as you read each one. Answer any questions. If anyone tries to be difficult and disagreeable, offer to talk with them individually at the end of the meeting – 5-15 min.**

- **Explain and ask for volunteers for the different roles within the group: Play Coordinator, Food Coordinator, etc. – 5 minutes.**

- **Share prayer requests and pray together – 10 minutes.**

- **Talk and eat – 15 minutes.**

New Testament Challenge

Growth Group Questions Week #1

Quick Facts about the Book of Matthew:

- Written by one of Jesus' disciples – Matthew (who was a tax collector)
- Originally believe to be the first Gospel –though now many scholars believe Mark is the oldest now. Was written in the first century AD and was in completed for within a few decades of Jesus' death. A very fresh history.
- Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience (whereas Luke wrote to a very Greek audience). Note the many references to Old Testament prophecy (very important to Jews) and that the genealogy in Matthew 1 only goes back to Abraham (the Father of the Israelite people). Luke's genealogy goes all the way back to Adam to emphasize Jesus' universal impact.
- The famous Sermon on the Mount is found in Matthew 5-7

Quick Facts about the Book of Acts:

- Really the Acts of the Apostles (those who saw the resurrected Jesus)
- Best history of the early church – from a handful of believers in Jerusalem to 5,000 in just a short time to having Christianity spread all across Asia Minor and into Europe in less than one generation. Unprecedented spread of a faith by a persecuted people through peaceful means.
- First half focuses on Peter. The last half focuses on Paul and his journeys.
- Was written by Luke who was a doctor and went with Paul on several of his mission trips.
- Acts is really Part II of the Gospel of Luke (continues the story) that we will read later this semester.

Discussion Questions for Monday, Oct. 12

1. What do you know about your genealogy? What would you like to discover about it? (Matthew 1 Genealogy)
2. How do you handle temptations? How did Jesus? What did he tell the Devil?
3. From Joseph's responsiveness of going to Egypt what do you learn about faith and obedience? How long would it take you to say "yes" if God asked you to relocate? What is your story of relocating to New York? (Matthew 2 – Jesus and family relocating)
4. Have you ever traveled where you did not speak the language? What happened? (Acts 2 – Pentecost)
5. As the cripple, what would you write as a diary entry for a typical day? When Peter grabs your hand? After the healing? (Acts 3 – Healing of the crippled man)

Discussion Questions for Tuesday, Oct. 13

6. Who has been a John the Baptist in your life? How did he or she prepare you to meet Jesus? Is there someone who is pointing you to Jesus as you consider Him? (Matt. 3)
7. What is the most persecution you have experienced due to your faith? How did you take it? (Acts 4)
8. Which responsibility at home or work would you gladly give up? Never give up? (Acts 6 – Apostles choose 12 people to carry out ministry of the church...what does this say about who should do the ministry of the church – the pastors or the members?)

Discussion Questions for Wednesday, Oct. 14

9. This past week, did you feel more blessed or stressed? What can you do to be more focused on God's blessings in your life? (Matthew 5 – Sermon on the Mount)
10. What causes you the most worry? What is God saying to you through this passage about handling your particular worry or disappointment? (Matthew 6 – Sermon on the Mount)
11. How did the Lord first get your attention? Was it in some dramatic event or something more subtle? (Acts 9 – Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus)

Discussion Questions for Thursday, Oct. 15

12. Describe a time when you saw a despised or neglected person receive a surprising amount of love and respect. (Matthew 8)
13. As a child, what foods did you refuse to eat? What foods do you still dislike today? (Acts 10 – Peter and Cornelius)

Discussion Questions for Friday, Oct. 16

14. What is the longest you have hiked or hitchhiked your way across country?
15. What was one of the biggest misunderstandings about Christianity you had to overcome before you could believe? (Acts 14)
16. What were some of the expected, extra-biblical rules you were supposed to follow in the church where you grew up? When you became a Christian? (Acts 15)

Discussion Questions for Saturday, Oct. 17

17. In what specific way can you be an encourager to someone in church leadership? In your family? Among your friends? (Matthew 11)
18. Where do you have an "open door" for ministry now: In your home? School? Work? Community? How will you take advantage of it? (Acts 15)

Discussion Questions for Sunday, Oct. 18

19. Can you see and hear Jesus at work in today's world? If so, how? (Matthew 13)
20. If you fed five thousand people at a picnic, what would you serve? (Matthew 14)
21. What place did your parents have to drag you to, because you were scared to go there: Circus? Dentist? Elsewhere?
22. How often do you judge other people, and what does the Bible say to do?

New Testament Challenge

Growth Group Questions Week #2

Ice Breaker Game Idea:

Play “2 Truths & a Lie” – Go around to everyone in the group and let each person share 3 things about themselves with the group...2 of which are true and one of which is a lie. Then let the rest of the group guess which of the 3 is the lie. It’s a great way to learn some interesting facts about people in the group and it’s fun to try to guess the lie 😊

Quick Facts about the Book of Romans:

- Paul probably wrote Romans around 58 AD from Corinth. He was about to return to Jerusalem with an offering he had raised from the churches he had planted to give to the church in Jerusalem which was suffering from severe persecution.
- Romans is the only letter Paul wrote to a church he had nothing to with starting and which to this point he had not been in contact with. Thus, note how Romans seems impersonal compared to Paul’s other letters to churches. There are few details of practical problems in Romans because Paul does not personally know the church.
- Romans is the most theological and least practical of Paul’s letters. Another reason (see the first reason above) is that Rome was the center of the known world at this time and a capital of intellect. Romans is laid out more as a theological treatise perhaps in part because Paul wanted to lay out the intellectual validity of the faith to those in Rome.
- Paul desperately wanted to visit Rome (which he would later do in chains and eventually he would die there)...so this letter introduces himself to the church in Rome. Paul’s passion was spreading the Good News of Jesus as far as he could. Like New York today, what influenced Rome influenced the world. But besides wanting to share in Rome – Paul also may have wanted to establish a base from which to take missionary journeys further west (maybe as far west as Spain).

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20)

1. If you had been one of the first hired workers, how would you have felt at pay time?
2. How do you feel about recent converts getting the same benefits as you in the kingdom?
3. Does being gracious to the workers at the eleventh hour equate to being unfair to the workers who were hired early in the morning?

The Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25)

4. What were the master’s expectations of his servants while he was away?
5. Why do you think the master became angry with the servant with one talent?

6. What are some talents either material or immaterial in your life that Jesus expects you to steward well and multiply?

Paul Sails for Rome (Acts 27)

7. What is the danger of equating comfort with God's will for your life?

All Things Working For the Good of Those Who Love Him (Rom. 8:28)

8. What situation could this verse be applied to in your life presently?

Being a Living Sacrifice (Rom. 12)

9. What do you hear when Paul says do not conform to the world? How do we stay engaged with our culture and those around us while remaining faithful to this command?
10. What does it mean to offer your body as a living sacrifice?
What are some ways that you have been able to practice the renewing of your mind?