

THIS IS US

Week 4 Leader Guide Human Life

THE WIN

The group member will challenge their assumptions about human life and learn how to fight from unity in the body of Christ so that discussions they have within the church and the culture can become bold, life giving, and reflecting the love of Christ instead of our opinions and emotions.

1-2
minutes

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

SAY THIS: In the message this week we learned that human life issues are not political, but biblical issues. How we treat one another, no matter if it is based on race, age, gender, or status, determines what you think about the image of God which is what you think about God Himself. Our God is Life and therefore any issues surrounding human life are God issues. God is grieved greatly when His image is treated with injustice and disrespected. Christians should be about preserving and promoting life in all areas of culture. This begins with challenging assumptions and fighting for unity in conversations.

5-10
minutes

WARM UP

ASK THIS:

- *Who has had an experience regarding a human life issue?*
- *How difficult is it to have a conversation about that topic? Ex: racism, immigration, abortion, sexuality.*

SAY THIS: Learning to have difficult *conversations* with tolerance and love are key for the Christ follower and their witness in a dark world. Therefore, we are going to have a few questions that will provoke us to possibly disagree so we can learn to embrace the difference so life conversations can happen.

Leader Tip: *This could be a difficult question for some group members. There is a high chance of disagreement, but we want to raise up people to be able to give a reason for their beliefs in love, even if disagreement happens. Be sure to watch the body language, watery or diverting of eyes, flushed face, shifting in seats etc. If you see these signs don't pressure but give them space. This early in the meeting is not the time to push for answers.*

30-35
minutes

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

SAY THIS: As we learned in the message this week how we treat one another, no matter our differences, directly reflects our love and thoughts towards God. We cannot stay silent on human life issues and we cannot simply allow our assumptions about an issue to bulldoze unity and love from the church.

ASK THIS: Who in your life right now do you struggle loving or desiring their best?

- What makes it so hard to desire their best? Is it a circumstance issue, or a dignity issue?
- How hard is it for you to remain calm in a tense conversation?
- How hard is it to have the humility to change your assumption in a conversation?

SAY THIS: We know that our culture is vastly overrun by thousands of different opinions on a wide range of topics regarding human life. Race, social class, sexuality, abortion, immigration, and even family and work relationships are involved in this category. However, as the church we must learn to see God's perspective on these topics and see them not as issues but people.

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 1:21-25

- What does it mean to be made in the image of God?
Guided Answer: "We were designed to reflect the image of God like in a mirror. His character and heart reflected through how we live our lives. Like a child wanting to mimic what he sees in his father, so do we desire to reflect what we see in our heavenly father."

- Who all is an image bearer?
- What is the problem with all image bearers due to sin?

Guided Answer: "We all have a dirty reflection now of the God we were designed to reflect"

SAY THIS: Our God designed life to be good. Good means to be orderly and right to produce the flourishing of life. That means our relationships, conversations, careers, and hearts were made to live and showcase order and truth to allow for flourishing life in others. Yet, that is far from what we see in our country isn't it? The problem isn't our politics or any one person. The problem is each of us individually having a heart that reflects a dirty image.

HAVE DIFFERENT PEOPLE READ: 1 John 4:7-14, Ephesians 4:1-6, Micah 6:8

ASK THIS: How does the way we treat the image bearers of God impact our treatment of God? Is there a connection?

- How do you have a conversation with someone with a different viewpoint?
 - What is your first impression and perspective on them?
- How does this showcase our sinful tendencies and assumptions?
 - Are you trying to win an argument for your identity or care for the soul of an individual?
- Why, or why not, should Christians be engaged in social justice?
- Do you unfriend, refuse to acknowledge or think less of, people because of an opinion?
- How does forgiveness play into our ability to reconcile relationships and show we value human life?
- How does the cross of Christ address justice and forgiveness?

SAY THIS: The issues surrounding topics in human life from racial harmony, abortion rights, human sexuality are chiefly cross issues. While the culture, and even our churches, can seem to disagree constantly as Christians we are not fighting for unity, we are fighting to maintain unity which the cross has already purchased. The church is the only place reconciliation and unity has already been established by one-man Jesus Christ. Our job is to maintain that unity through graciously looking to represent the cross in our conversations and actions daily. To deal with a Christian according to their sin is to make a mockery of the cross and behave contrary to the gospel. This does not mean we don't talk about the offense, or behave as if nothing happened, but are able to have deeper discussions from a place of unity bought by Christ and see them as forgiven to seek growth through discussion and love.

DIGGING DEEPER

[Check out these videos for further discussion regarding human life and specific topics within this discussion](#)

- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/200345>
- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/176267>
- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Training/Post/View/167327>
- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Training/Post/View/263920>

End Here:

Don't forget, change starts with our own hearts! We need Christ to change our hearts to be gentle, humble, self-controlled, and loving above all else towards these issues. This is why we did not dig completely into specific topics in the study. If we do not see our need for personal change, our world will never change without the church changing its discussion abilities regarding human life by finding the ability to speak boldly, lovingly, and tolerant of the truth of God's perspective. We do not fight for our opinions, no matter how close we hold them dear, but are constantly re-evaluating our opinions in light of God's word.

Remember to challenge yourself daily in these areas:

- **Challenge Assumptions:** Are you willing to hear someone else's opinion gently and humbly to learn?
- **Challenge our hearts:** Why do I think the way I do? Do I see an issue or an individual to love?
- **Cling to the Cross:** How does Jesus address this topic? Am I trying to showcase unity and love or winning a debate?
 - -Who do we personally and corporately regard today as less than human?

Pray: together for God to help us as a group and as a church in these areas.

Practice: Invite someone you disagree with, or struggle loving, to lunch or dinner. This could be a boss, co-worker, person of different ethnic backgrounds and show them you love and respect them as an image bearer of God despite difference of thought.

CLOSING THOUGHT

"It is our job as ministers to bring the church back to the center of the human race. But we can only bring the church back to the center of the human race when we bring Christ back to the center of the church." – Martin Luther King Jr.