

GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Help the group members:

1. to believe sanctification is indissolubly bound to justification
2. to consciously and deliberately dedicate yourself to live a holy life, especially toward the other sex

I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

1. Prayer

Pray that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

2. Meditation

Worship is to thank God.

Theme: To thank God because Jesus Christ is our righteousness and holiness

Read the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

➤ *From a human point of view, we Christians are not from noble birth and also not influential. But in Jesus Christ everything changes!*

The hostile world may despise Christians, but God has chosen us Christians. In Jesus Christ we Christians become very special. God uses us to gain victories for him in the world. By God’s doing Christians are in Christ Jesus and he is the Christian’s wisdom, righteousness, holiness and ultimate salvation (cf. Romans 8:29-30).

Thus we Christians have our judicial state or position (justification) and our moral state or position (sanctification) solely and completely in Jesus Christ!

➤ *But what we have received in Jesus Christ we Christians must also work out practically in this life.*

Christians have the responsibility to live righteous and holy lives in this world. “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12-13). “Be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fail” (2 Peter 1:10). (cf. Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4-5).

3. Worship

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to worship (in one or two sentences) God as the One who sees to it that we Christians live righteous and holy lives.

II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

The theme for this meeting is: Sanctification

Read or explain in your own words.

Sanctification is indissolubly connected to justification. You are saved in order to live holy! You show your faith by your works (James 2:18) and you prove that you have been justified (saved) by living a holy life (Romans 6:19).

III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.

Theme: Sanctification

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|---------------------|--|
| Day 1 | Romans 12:1-3
Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed |
| Day 2 | Romans 13:11-14
Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ |
| Day 3 | Luke 6:41-45
First take the plank out of your own eye |
| Day 4 ^{BS} | Ephesians 4:17-32
Give up your old life-style |
| Day 5 | Matthew 15:7-20
Human religious traditions do not lead to sanctification |
| Day 6 | Philippians 3:7-16
Press on to take hold of sanctification!
Christ Jesus has taken hold of you |

- Day 7 1 Peter 1:13-19
Be holy in all you do
- Day 8 1 Peter 2:11-12
Lead a holy life amidst unbelievers and non-Christians (cf. 1 Peter 4:12-16)
- Day 9 2 Peter 1:3-11
Make your calling and election sure by living a holy life
- Day 10 Leviticus 19:2 and 19:11-18
Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy

IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.
If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

1. Discussing the study

Discuss the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

Theme: Justification and sanctification

- What is the false teaching of people who are against keeping the law (the Ten Commandments)?
- What is the teaching of people who are for the keeping of the Jewish law (including the ceremonial law with all its human additions)?
- What is the main teaching of Romans chapter 6?
- Why does a born-again Christian want to live holy? And why can and shall he live holy?

2. Commitment

Let the group members consider the following question and record their answer:

- “Which things have you put off the past year?”
- “Which things will you put on the coming year?”

3. Personal sharing

Discuss personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

1. Review of previous Bible verses

Let pairs of group members review each other’s previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

Explain the meaning of the new Bible verse.

SANCTIFICATION Hebrews 12:14

Make every effort to live in peace with all men
and be holy;
without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

VI. BIBLE STUDY (45 min.)

Theme: Why am I here?

1. Bible Study

Make use of the 5 step method and study:

Ephesians 4:17 – 5:21

Ephesians 4

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the Day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and

compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

2. Emphasis

Why are you here on earth? You are here on earth and in this time in order to live a holy life for God

3. Explanation for the group leader

4:17-19.

➤ *The word 'walk'*

'Walk' expresses the way you *live* and behave yourself. You used to *live* in sin, in the ways of the world and in the ways of Satan (Ephesians 2:1-3). Now God urges you

to *live* a life worthy of his calling (Ephesians 4:1). He insists that you no longer *live* as the non-Christians do (Ephesians 4:17), but to *live* a life of love, to *live* in the light and to *live* as wise Christians (Ephesians 5:2,8,15).

➤ *The 'Gentiles'*

'The Gentiles' is a term for non-Christians. All attempts of non-Christians to live a happy life ultimately end in disappointment. Their lives are a long series of expectations that are never fulfilled. They strive, but never reach. They blossom, but never bear fruit. They experience what the Preacher says in Ecclesiastes 1:7-8; 2:10-11

⁷ All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.

⁸ All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing,
nor the ear its fill of hearing.

¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my labour,
and this was the reward for all my toil.

¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun.

➤ *Ignorance*

People are darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God and ignorant because they have hardened their hearts against the truth in the Bible and ultimately against Jesus Christ. Shortly after the creation, people had knowledge of the living God. But after the fall, people gradually began to forget God. They started to live their lives without God (and this is called 'secularism'). When God spoke to them through Noah and Enoch, they hardened their hearts. Every time people give themselves over to sin, God gives them over to the consequences of their sins. The non-Christians harden their hearts against the God who revealed himself in the Bible. As a consequence God allows their hearts to remain hardened! God hardens those who harden themselves against God. They deliberately choose to be unholy and do unrighteousness. They refuse to consider God. They become blind with respect to knowing God. They even become blind to the fact that they are blind (John 9:40-41)! In this process they become ignorant of God. They lose all sense of God's existence and reality, presence and nearness. The modern world, whether secular or religious, is not very much different than the classical world!

4:22-24.

➤ *A definite change.*

The gospel calls you by means of a command: “Repent (change your thinking/mind)” (Mark 1:15). While other religions in the world calls people to join, the gospel calls people to be transformed! It is impossible to become a Christians and remain the same! You must *once for all* put off the old self, because it leads to death. You must *once for all* be made new in your thinking and attitude and *once for all* put on the new self. These three verbs stand in the aorist time, which denotes a single action or event in the past. They refer to the time you became a Christian (verse 20). In this context they do not refer to the continual process of sanctification in the present.

➤ *‘The old man’*

This term refers to the old unregenerate nature that is doomed to eternal death. It does not know God, has misleading sinful desires, lives the life style of this world and needs a radical inner renewal. When such a person hears the gospel and repents, he *once for all* puts off this old sinful nature. He nails his old clothes (a symbol of his sins in the past), as it were, onto the cross. This symbolises his rebirth and conversion (cf. Romans 6:3) and not his ongoing process of sanctification (cf. Romans 6:13,19).

➤ *‘The new man’*

This term refers to the new, regenerate nature that inherits eternal life. The new believer *once for all* puts on the new regenerate nature that is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. At his regeneration and conversion the believer is clothed, as it were, with Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14) and becomes ‘a new creation’ (2 Corinthians 5:17), in which God judicially ascribes (imputes, reckons) to him and morally grants him the perfect righteousness and the radiant holiness of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). The righteousness and holiness which God imputes and grants are real and not a false illusion. ‘Putting on’ here refers to a once for all submission and dedication to Jesus Christ and does not refer to an ongoing process of sanctification.

Also in Colossians 3 these words stand in the aorist tense: “*Once for all* put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature (Colossians 3:5), “You must *once for all* rid yourselves of all such things” (Colossians 3:8), “Since you *once for all* have taken off your old self with its practices and have *once for all* put on the new self, which is being renewed” (Colossians 3:9-10). “*Once for all* clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12).

➤ Summary.

You must be what you in principle have become at your rebirth! Let the righteousness and holiness, which were ascribed (imputed) and granted to you at your rebirth, become visible!

You CAN live righteous and holy! Therefore, LIVE OUT the righteousness and holiness, which you have received from Jesus Christ. “CONTINUE TO WORK OUT your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12-13).

4:25.

➤ *Live out what you already are on the inside.*

Some Bible translations say, “Therefore, each of you *must put off the lie* and speak truthfully”, as if ‘putting off the lie’ is an action *after regeneration*. But the original Greek text says, “Therefore, *having put off* the lie (*at your regeneration*), speak the truth.” Speaking the truth every Day is an action which makes your rebirth visible! Live out visibly what in principle you already are on the inside!

➤ *Virtues.*

The specific sins that have already been put off at regeneration (the beginning of your Christian life) must now without delay become visible in their opposite virtues! The recreated new life in Christ must become a daily visible reality! These sins are: lies, anger, theft, bitterness, rage, brawling, slander, malice, sexual impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking.

The specific virtues are: speaking the truth, working for a living, sharing with those in need, edifying speech, kindness, compassion, forgiving spirit, love and thanksgiving.

4:26.

➤ *Anger.*

There is something like holy and righteous anger. God has holy and righteous anger (indignation) against sin and injustice (Romans 1:18; cf. Psalm 5:4-5; 11:6). There is also something like sinful anger or rage. People usually have sinful anger and rage when they feel hurt.

Sinful anger makes you a fool (Ecclesiastes 7:9). Sinful anger leads only to evil (Psalm 37:8). Sinful anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires (James 1:19-20). Sinful anger may affect your prayers (1 Timothy 2:8). Sinful anger disqualifies you for leadership (Titus 1:7). Sinful anger grieves the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-31). Angry people must face God’s judgement (Matthew 5:22).

Christians may have holy and righteous anger against the wickedness and injustice in the world. But Christians may not express their anger in a sinful way, e.g. with verbal abuse (cf. Psalm 3:7; 10:15) or physical violence (cf. Matthew 23:35). A Christian may only express his anger against the offending person. He may not make innocent people the victim of his anger. He must express his anger in a controlled and respectful manner. And he may pray that God intervenes in the plots and evil of the wicked (cf. Psalm 55:9).

Some people are angry for years against a particular person. They allow themselves to be consumed by bitterness (revenge). They keep an accurate updated list of all the injustice they think or feel they suffer at the hands of the other person. They deride, criticise, judge and gossip about the offender.

But the Bible teaches that a Christian should not be angry longer than sundown. The sooner you reconcile yourself with the offender the better. For God it does not matter who was the original offender or guilty person, because both must take the initiative to reconcile himself to the other (cf. Matthew 5:22-24; 18:15). A Christian must be merciful and forgiving towards an offender. After reconciliation he may not try to avoid the other person, but remain friendly.

4:27.

➤ *Do not give the devil a foothold.*

A Christian must not allow the devil or one of his allies to get a foot in the door and so force an entry into his heart. A Christian must not give the devil any chance to enter into his thoughts, imagination, feelings, motives, attitudes or behaviour. When the devil gets a chance to attack you, he will (1 Peter 5:8).

The spiritual battle against the devil begins at the door, i.e. at the very first confrontation with him. Already then a Christian must resist him by faith (James 4:7). This admonition is especially directed at anger (cf. Genesis 4:6-7). Anger is a door through which the devil is eager to enter. That is why verse 32 says that a Christian must be quick to forgive, just as Jesus Christ has forgiven him (cf. James 1:19-20). Jesus warns that a person who refuses to forgive will also not be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).

4:29.

➤ *Speaking.*

The book of Proverbs has many good advices with regard to speaking (the tongue). "The heart of the righteous weighs its answers." "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply." "A gentle answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:28,23,1)

Ephesians 4:15 says that a Christian must speak the truth in love, because truth without love becomes legalism, and

love without truth degenerates into sentimentality. Ephesians 4:29 says that a Christian may only say things that build up and give grace to the other person.

Thus, before a Christian wants to say something, he must ask himself three questions:

- *Is it true?* If what he wants to say is not true he must shut up.
- *Is it edifying?* If what he wants to say is not going to build up the other he must keep quiet.
- *Is it love?* If what he wants to say cannot be spoken in love he must remain silent.

4:30.

➤ *The Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal power, but a person who speaks, acts and feels. Because the Holy Spirit is God, he becomes grieved by unrighteousness and unholy-ness (sin).

5:2.

➤ *Christ was not a victim.*

Christ was not murdered. He deliberately and willingly gave his life as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins. He laid down his life for his sheep (John 10:11,18).

5:3-5a.

➤ *Do not speak lightly.*

"Among you there must not even be a hint of ..." means that these things should not be found with a Christian. Of course, Christians may speak about these sins when they educate others (their children, youth, etc). But they may not do these sins or talk about them as an insipid joke.

Sexual immorality.

Sexual immorality (Greek: porneia) includes every form of sexual transgression: in the thoughts (Matthew 5:28), speech (Ephesians 5:4-5) or acts. It refers to illegal sex, e.g. sex before marriage and sex outside your own marriage. In the Bible, the only lawful sex is with your marriage partner inside marriage (Hebrews 13:4)!

➤ *Impurity.*

Impurity also refers to sexual immorality but then especially to every form of unnatural and depraved sexual practices as for example: incest, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality (Leviticus 18:6,20,22,23; Romans 1:26-27).

➤ *Greed.*

Greed consists of stinginess, gluttony and an insatiable desire for money, power, porno, etc. It is likened to idolatry, because it occupies and controls a person completely.

5:5b.

➤ *The kingdom of Christ and of God* (cf. study 20).

The kingdom began with the first coming of Christ (Matthew 12:28-30) and consists of God's kingship or sovereign rule in and through Christ in the hearts (Luke 17:20-21) and lives (Matthew 6:33) of Christians.

This kingship results: (1) in the salvation of his people from beginning (Mark 10:25-26) to end (1 Corinthians 15:26), (2) in the establishment of his Church in the world (Matthew 16:18-19), (3) in the transformation which Christians bring to society (Matthew 5:14-16; 13:33; Romans 14:17), and finally in the new heaven and new earth (Matthew 25:34; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 11:15).

The kingdom in its present still imperfect form grows all the time to include more and more people from all the nations on earth (Matthew 13:31-32), but among them there are also 'weeds' (Matthew 13:25,38) or 'bad fish' (Matthew 13:47-50), i.e. unbelievers.

The kingdom in its future perfect form is depicted as 'the New Jerusalem' descending on the new earth at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Revelation 21:1-2). Then Jesus Christ will be made subject to God the Father, who had put everything under him. This means, that Jesus Christ will hand his office as Mediator back to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-25) and God the Father and God the Son will reign forever in the eternal kingdom (2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 22:3).

5:7.

➤ *Do not be partners with them* (Greek: *Do not share your life with them, do not cast your lot together with them*).

Christians are forbidden to have a confidential close relationship with people who claim to be Christians, but live as non-Christians (1 Corinthians 5:9-11). Christians are forbidden to be yoked together with non-Christians or unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). Of course Christians should relate to non-Christians, otherwise they would not be able to become Christians. The non-Christians must hear the gospel and see how it actually functions in the lives of genuine Christians. Christians should not allow non-Christians to influence them, but rather have good influence on the non-Christians.

5:10.

➤ *Find out what pleases the Lord*.

Because the Bible does not deal with every kind of behaviour, Christians must 'find out' (literally: test in order to approve) what pleases God and what does not please God. Loving God with all your mind and listening to your conscience and especially to the Holy Spirit will help you in this.

5:11-14.

➤ *Expose the works of darkness*.

'To expose' the works of darkness means to bring such things into the light so that people may see what they really are. How do you do that practically?

In stead of publicly confronting or accusing the guilty person (and thus shame him), a Christian should first confront him with his darkness under four eyes (and in this way not shame him) (Matthew 18:15-17).

But Christians may openly take a stand against injustice and unholiness in society. If possible, he should also give a hand in opposing injustice, not with weapons, but by exposing wickedness, confronting the wicked and establishing justice.

➤ *Wake up*.

The words, "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" are probably a part of an ancient Christian hymn or words that were spoken when someone was baptised with water.

5:15-21.

➤ *Be filled with the Spirit*.

This is the main verb in the passage and is a command (thus not an option), continually applicable (present continuous tense) and something God must do (passive voice). Therefore Christians must obey this command again and again and allow the Holy Spirit to take control of their lives. Christians must learn to live in complete dependence of the Holy Spirit in them. This is the normal Christian life. "Filling" does not refer to Christians receiving more of the Holy Spirit (the Holy Spirit is not a substance or power, but a Person), but rather refers to the Holy Spirit receiving more control over the Christian!

What is written in verse 15-17 is connected to verse 18 with the conjunction 'and'. The Spirit-filled life becomes visible when a Christian takes care how he walks (behaves): he acts with wisdom (putting God's truths into practice), makes the most of every God-given opportunity and he is eager to understand God's will in every situation.

The other verbs in verse 19-21 are participles and express how the Spirit-filled life becomes visible: in meetings where Christians speak, sing spiritual songs and make music. And it becomes visible when Christians thank God for what he says and does and where Christians submit to one another's authority.

5:21

➤ *How does a Christian express his submission to another person's authority?*

In the Christian marriage relationship the husband submits to the authority of his wife to serve him by helping him and loving him. And the wife submits to the authority of her husband to serve her by giving good leadership and loving her (Ephesians 5:22-25).

In the church Christians should talk about themselves in accordance with the grace and spiritual gifts God has entrusted to them. Christians should not claim for themselves spiritual abilities and tasks which they cannot account for to others or to God (Romans 12:3). For example: if God has not called you to leadership or has not given you a spiritual gift of leadership, then do not pretend to be a leader. But when you have received the spiritual gift of serving, you may say it. Better still is to live out your spiritual gift and let other Christians comment on what you are good at or how you are building them up (*Read* Romans 12:4-8).

Christians should regard other Christians as better as or more important than themselves (Philippians 2:3) especially in the area of the grace which God has granted to them. Every Christian has received grace from God

and some of that may be a spiritual gift. But God's grace and spiritual gifts to you does not make you more important than another Christian. Acknowledge that other Christians are something or have something that is more important than you are or have. This should not make you uncertain or cause inferior feelings, because you too are something else and have something else that is more important than the other is or has. You are both precious in God's eyes! And each of you has received grace from God that makes you unique and very special! Other Christians will regard you as more important in that area.

VII. PRAYER (8 min.)

Pray with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught him during this meeting.

Pray with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)

Hand out the preparation for the next gathering.