

The Gospel Project for Adults, Spring 2015
Extended Instructional Approaches for Session 8

Introduction: *Help your group to connect the major theme with devotion.*

Have a group member read this devotion to the group.

“Putting Your Brother First”

Let no one seek his own, but each one the others well-being. – 1 Corinthians 10:24

As a Christian you are obligated to view your actions in light of how they will affect other Christians. You will discover God’s Will for your life when you consider His activity in the lives of others. This goes contrary to worldly thinking. The world encourages you to live your own life, taking care of your own needs and wants first. Sin promotes independence. It isolates you from others and separates you from those you could help or who could encourage you. God designed you for interdependence.

Whenever you meet another Christian, you come face to face with Christ (John 13:20). There ought to be a deep respect within you as you encounter other lives guided by the Holy Spirit. Do not live as if you have responsibility toward your Christian brothers or sisters. God holds you accountable for how you relate to them. Don’t revel in your responsibility toward others (Rom. 14:15). Paul celebrated his freedom in Christ, but he was keenly sensitive to what might cause other Christians harm (1 Cor. 8:13). He was aware that his sin could not take place in isolation but could bring pain to many others (1 Cor. 5:6).

You have a responsibility to live in such a way that you do not hurt others. You must deny yourself and allow the Holy Spirit to put to death your natural inclination to be self-centered. As long as you focus on yourself, you will be oblivious to the needs of others. Ask God to free you from selfishness so that your life is free to bless others.

What is the devotion trying to reveal to us about our theme of Fellowship? Have a few from your group share their answers.

{Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Experiencing God Day-By-Day* (Nashville: B&H, 1998), 130.}

Part 1: *Engage your group by giving each of them time to share his or her Fellowship Story.*

Have your group break up into groups of 3–4 and allow them to share their Fellowship Stories. Ask the groups to take 10–12 minutes and give each person in their huddle an opportunity to share his or her story of redemption. That would allow each person three minutes to share during the huddle time. Allow them all time to share how they entered into the fellowship with Christ and how they joined your faith family.

After the allotted time come back together and ask if anyone would be willing to share his or testimony aloud—if there is time, do 1–2 testimonies. But don't stop there. Considering this as a basis for authentic fellowship in your group, pass around a sign-up sheet asking everyone over the course of the following weeks or months to be willing to share their testimony with your group. This will help your group embrace each other's Fellowship Stories. What a sweet time of growth!

Part 2: *Help group members to understand through relational response.*

In order to live out Romans 12:9-18, your group must know each other. In this day and age, we cannot assume that groups actually know each other within the group. Sometimes a person is there to “check off the box” or because his or her spouse has encouraged him or her to come. This activity will encourage each person to think beyond him or herself.

Hang a poster board on the focal wall that says: “*What action/activities need to be taken to help us live out Romans 12:9-18?*” Then instruct everyone to write down his or her respective answer on a post-it note. As a sign of commitment, have them come forward and place it on the poster board saying they are willing to take the next step relationally to share in fellowship with Christ’s people.

Part 3: Engage your groups thinking by planning a missional activity.

Take time as a group to pray and brainstorm a mission project your group can do in the next few months. The project needs to be one in which you have actually to leave the comforts of your group space and as a group figure out how to meet the needs of those around you (examples: soup kitchen, homeless shelter, city rescue mission, food pantry, women’s shelter, schools, senior centers, neighborhood schools, etc.). Have someone in the group make the contact for the group and report back about dates and needs. If you are struggling with picking a location to serve, ask your ministry staff about areas where the church already ministers and how your group can assist. The important thing is that your group gets out and practices being on mission for Christ. We are partners in grace living out the Philippians 1:3-7 passage.

Conclusion: Challenge your students to meditate and live it out.

As the lesson concludes, ask each member in your group to take a piece of paper and have him or her write a prayer of surrender to the key things he or she want to take from today’s lesson. Write these three questions on the board for each person to think about in their prayer:

- What is an area I need to reconcile with Christ and grow in my fellowship story?
- Are there things I need to give up in order to make time for others in the body?

- In what ways am I on mission for Christ?

Consider playing appropriate music in the background while group meditates on areas they need to surrender and offer to the Lord.

Teaching Tip of the Week

We must as leaders live out fellowship with Christ through a daily relationship with Him. Our best lessons will be taught out of the overflow of our hearts. You will lead best from an inner life that is growing in Christ. Every believer should daily be connecting with Christ, but this is especially true for a group leaders. Paul said, “Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Spend time with the Lord daily and He will help you fill your deep longing for intimacy, and then others will see Jesus in you.