Small Group Leader Guide: Luther’s Five Favorite Verses

Week Four

Grace Alone

Ephesians 2:8-9

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God.*

*15 minutes*  **Social Time**. Fellowship time is important! Plus people do it anyway.

*15 minutes*  **Opening**.

* Welcome everyone.
* Remind the group of the three parts of the PTA prayer model: Praise, Thank, Ask. If someone volunteered to lead the opening prayer last week, ask them to do so now. Be sure to remind them to use this model! If no one volunteered, you lead the opening prayer using the PTA model. You may prepare it in advance if you wish.
* **Check in.** Going around the room, remind each person in turn of what they said they were going to do at the end of the last session. Ask “How did that go?”
* Ask the following **Launching Questions**:
  + Has anyone had someone tell them that their salvation wasn’t valid? What was your reaction?
  + Would you spend more time reading the bible to learn about God, or thinking on your own and trying to figure God out?
  + Predestination is the idea that someone’s eternal fate is predetermined by God. What are your thoughts on predestination?

*45 minutes*  **Discussion**.

* Ask for a volunteer to read the theme verse for this session, Ephesians 2:8-9, which is at the top of their handouts.
* Watch the sermon from May 14. Participants make notes on their Small Group Handout.
* Discussion questions (see page 2-3)

*15 minutes* **Closing**.

* Ask everyone to share their answer to the Two Questions, “What has God been doing in your life in the past week?” and “What are you going to do about it?” Record the answers.
* Before the closing prayer, ask the group once again “What are the three parts of the PTA prayer?” If someone else has volunteered, have them close with this prayer. Before that, though, ask for volunteers for the opening and closing prayers next week.
* If no one volunteered for the opening and closing prayers this week, prayerfully consider in advance who God might be calling to do them next week. Before you lead the closing prayer, ask for volunteers again, but if no one volunteers ask two people to do them. Say “Would you be willing to lead the opening/closing prayer next week? You may write it out in advance if you wish.” Use invitation & challenge until someone says yes.

Small Group Discussion Handout

Week Four

Grace Alone

Ephesians 2:8-9

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God.*

1. Write down your thoughts and observations from the bible study and the sermon. Share them with the group for discussion.
2. Key words are those which, because of emphasis or repetition, stand out as being central to the message of the passage. What are some keywords or phrases in this passage?
3. Who gets the credit for your salvation? Why?
4. In his book *Lectures on Genesis,* Martin Luther made it clear that he thought we should not even think about predestination. He declared the very act of thinking about it to be sinful, writing ““These are delusions of the devil, with which he tries to cause us to doubt and disbelieve, although Christ came into this world to make us completely certain.” Luther taught that we were not to try to use logic to determine God’s will, but instead we should rely on the bible alone. When is a time when you used logic to try to figure out what God wants or thinks? What was the result of your attempts at logic?
5. Martin Luther taught that we are to look to God as revealed in Christ, and not to speculate about unrevealed aspects of God’s will. How is this easy for you, and how is it hard?
6. What things do you give God credit for? What things *should* we give God credit for?
7. Is there a limit to God’s love? Why do you say that?
8. Is there a limit to God’s grace? Why do you say that?
9. Should there be limits on our love and grace toward others? If so, what are they?
10. Rank the following three in terms of who you listen to the most, with #1 being who you listen to the most, #3 being the least, and #2 being in the middle:

God Yourself Others

1. What should that order be? And how can you get it there?
2. The Two Questions

This is what God has been doing in my life over the past week: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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This is what I’m going to do about it: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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