Small Group Leader Guide: Luther’s Five Favorite Verses

Week One

Romans 1:16-17

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

*15 minutes*  **Opening**.

* Welcome everyone.
* Opening prayer using the PTA model below, or differently as the Holy Spirit leads you.

*Lord, we praise you for your grace and mercy. We thank you that you have chosen to save us as a free gift of your love. We ask you to bless us as we talk, that your will would be revealed and your Kingdom would grow. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

* **Launching Questions** For the first week these are designed to help everyone get to know each other. Go around the room and ask each person to share the following:
  + Your name
  + Tell us about your family
  + What’s your faith background
  + How long have you been at Amazing Grace, or what’s your connection if not a member

*45 minutes*  **Discussion**.

* Ask for a volunteer to read the theme verse for this session, Romans 1:16-17, which is at the top of their handouts.

*16 For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”*

* Watch the sermon from April 23. Participants make notes on their Small Group Handout.
* Discussion questions (see page 2-3)

*15 minutes* **Closing**.

* Ask each person to share their answer to the Two Questions. Write down their answers.
  + What is God doing in your life?
  + What are you going to do about it?
* Closing prayer using the PTA model, or differently as the Holy Spirit leads you.

*Lord, we praise you for being with us during this time. We thank you for all the ways we have grown. We ask that you would continue to guide us until we meet again, that we would continue to grow in love and love by serving. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

Small Group Discussion Handout

Week One

Romans 1:16-17 (New Living Translation)

*16 For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”*

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 key words or phrases in this passage?
3. This was one of Luther’s favorite bible verses. What is one of yours, and why?
4. The “Good News” referred to in the first sentence of v17 is the Gospel message. According to this, what is the central message of the Gospels, and therefore of the bible?
5. What does it mean that “God makes us right in God’s sight”? What is our role in our salvation? What do we do?
6. Martin Luther praised the Book of Romans: "It is the chief part of the New Testament and the perfect gospel … the absolute epitome of the gospel." Read Romans 1:8-17, and discuss why Luther might have said that.
7. From 1513-1517, Luther kept thinking about Romans 1:17. He said : *"Night and day I pondered until … I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Therefore I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise … This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven."* Martin Luther was born again, and the reformation began in his heart. What do you think Luther meant that this passage “became to me a gateway into heaven”?
8. This verse profoundly changed Luther. Think of a time when you vastly changed your opinion about something. How did it feel? What was life like after vs before?
9. Luther wrote the following in "A Brief Instruction On What To Look For and Expect In The Gospels" Published in 1522: *“When you open the book containing the Gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to Him, you should therein perceive the sermon or the Gospel through which He is coming to you, or you are being brought to Him. For the preaching of the Gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to Him. When you see how He works, however, and how He helps everyone to whom He comes or who is brought to Him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that He is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favor through the Gospel. If you pause here and let Him do you good, that is, if you believe that He benefits and helps you, then you really have it. Then Christ is yours, presented to you as a gift.”*

Most people have wondered at some point (or their entire lives) if they were smart enough or good enough, or didn’t measure up in some way. While you still might not get picked first for a friendly sports game, Luther wanted people to know that God’s love and forgiveness meant everyone is good enough for God’s salvation. What situations make you question whether God can love you just the way you are?

1. What does God says to us when we are feeling insecurity, guilt, and shame?
2. Do you own your own personal faith? Do you truly believe that God brought his son Jesus into this world to die for every sin you ever have or will commit? If so, what does that knowledge do for you?

This is what God is doing in my life: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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