

LIFE Group Leader Handout

January 20, 2019

It's Day--Mind the Gap!

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Scripture--I John 3:16-24

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Main Idea--God Uses His People to Close the Gap Between His Will and the World As It Is

What Jesus said: *We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.* John 9:4

What "the works of Him who sent me" look like:

- They bring God glory
- They seem a lot like work--*the title contains the word "work"*
- They include the everyday
- They also include "Gap Works"

Personal Ministry Line--those who never become involved in personal ministry never become true disciples--they are information gatherers.

"Gap Works" often arise from a sense of injustice: "That's all I can stand, and I can't stand no more."

Not focused on my rights but on what's right.

Jesus crossed the personal ministry line when He came to earth to live as an example and die as a sacrifice for sin.

Application--

- Was there a time when your heart was deeply moved by a situation that you know grieved the heart of God as well?
- What actions have come about as a result of that?
- How is God leading you in this? *18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

Lead From the Ways of God

As a leader, what is your motivation and paradigm for leading?

As leaders in the church, what people need to see that's different in godly leaders as opposed to other leaders is that we lead out of a place of friendship with God, where we know His presence and are getting to know His character and ways.

In Exodus, Moses declared to God, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" (Exodus 33:15-16)

How do we get to know God's character? By digging into the Bible. Scripture helps us wash away misconceptions we have about God and get to know what He's truly like.

As you get to know His character, you can ask Him to make that character more a part of your own life. God won't wave a magic wand to make you suddenly operate out of that characteristic. Instead, He will start working it into your life, but you have to be paying attention to the opportunities He brings your way and submit to the process. Don't be surprised when you pray for patience if God starts bringing you opportunities to practice patience!

In addition to learning God's character, we need to learn His ways – *how* He goes about doing things. As we learn His ways, we get to know Him more deeply.

He does things differently, have you noticed? For example, one of God's ways is that to be the greatest leader, you must become the greatest servant. That's not the world's way of operating, that's God's way.

In Psalm 25:4, David declared, "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." In Exodus 33:13, Moses asked God to "teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you." And Hosea writes, "The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them." (Hosea 14:9)

Get out your Bible, jump into the character and ways of God, and then inform your leadership paradigms with them. As a result, you'll see more people wanting to follow you as a leader because they see God's character and ways in you.

For Further Thought:

- What are some examples of God's character and ways? How would adopting them yourself help you become a better leader?
- What are some misconceptions about God's character you had that you have been able to change as a result of reading the Bible?
- What are some of the ways of God in regards to dealing with interpersonal conflict? Handling criticism? Addressing sin in another person's life?
- What is one tangible change you can make in either your life or leadership to act more in line with the character and ways of God?

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