

# LIFE Group Leader Handout

November 24, 2019

## ***One Less Thing To Worry About***

Pastor Michael O'Connor

### **Scripture--I Peter 1:3-12**

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

*10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

### **Main Idea--We Rejoice Through Trials Because God Has Given Us a Living Hope**

Developing Perspective--from history

- God initiates
- History testifies

Developing Perspective--from destiny

The good news--

- There is an inheritance
- It is secure--imperishable, undefiled, unfading

The trials God allows--

- They grieve us
- They prove us
- They bring glory to God

God initiates--What response is He looking for? Faith

Jesus the Good Shepherd

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."* (John 10:27-30)

### **Application--**

- Which phrases in this passage of Scripture are most precious to you?
- Was there an "untruth" you believed that this Scripture corrects?
- Can you share a testimony of a trial that God used for good--to prove your faith?

## THREE WAYS TO ENGAGE GROUP MEMBERS ON THE FRINGE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

*By Ken Braddy*

For many years I've worked on my golf game. I've taken lessons, invested in new clubs, tried different types of golf balls, and worked on my putting. My golf game changed for the better when I began spending time working on shots from the fringe, the area around the edge of the putting green. No matter how much I practiced and prepared for a round of golf, my approach shots to the greens almost always seemed to end up on the fringe rather than on the putting surface.

The fringe isn't necessarily a bad place to be. After all, the green is close by and I'm not too far away from the hole. Skilled players and professional golfers know how to make specialty shots from the fringe to move the ball onto the putting surface. So what does golf and hitting shots from the fringe have to do with small groups? Plenty, actually!

Your church, like my church, has people on the "fringe" during the holidays. You can spot them quickly – they look a little lost when they come into your building. They often arrive early and sit down without talking to anyone. Sometimes you'll find them pouring over your worship bulletin before the service begins. And sometimes you'll find that fringe people are actually church members who haven't attended in a while, but have come back for a special service at Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Like an errant golf ball on the fringe is close to the goal (the hole), these fringe members and guests are close to the real goal, too—being in a group. Group leaders probably have people on the fringe of their group. There are certainly people on the fringe of your church. Like the golf ball on the fringe, they're close. They're present for worship, but perhaps don't associate with a small group.

Maybe you have a different kind of fringe person altogether – they have come to your group, but over time they've slipped away, and now they are distant and inactive. They are still in some proximity to your group, but they aren't "on the green."

### 3 WAYS TO REACH "FRINGE FOLKS"

Just like golf balls, people end up on the fringe. Here are some ways to move them closer to the goal of group involvement.

#### 1. Assign someone from the group to reach out to the person on the fringe

If the fringe person is a former regular attender, he/she knows at least one or two people in the group and will be closer to them than anyone else. Ask those people to reach out to the fringe person, without being obnoxiously obvious! You might suggest they start with a simple invitation to have coffee or dinner to catch up. During the time together, the wayward people can be encouraged to get back in the swing of things and rejoin the group.

#### 2. Invite folks on the fringe to holiday parties.

For people on the fringe, it's much easier to slide back into group life through a fun event than it is to simply show up for Bible study. Fun fellowships can be ways to help folks on the fringe feel less awkward about plugging back in.

If your group is having fun, make certain to invite each fringe member of your group, plus any folks who are guests to your church who are on the fringe. You'd be surprised how many people are lonely and waiting for an invitation to connect with others in a fun, safe way.

#### 3. Be persistent.

Don't expect immediate results when you try to bring wandering group members back into the fold. Take a long-term approach, and be thankful if one or two return quickly. That normally won't be the case, so you have to be persistent in your ongoing outreach to them. Remember what a friend once told me about persistence: "A steady drop wears out the rock."

As a general rule, folks on the fringe aren't going to take the initiative to connect or reconnect themselves to your group. That's your responsibility as a group leader. Lead well, and get your entire group involved in reclaiming those folks on the fringe.