

Preparing for LifeGroup

1. Prepare for each LifeGroup session by praying for:
 - A. Each group member
 - B. That God would make His Word (the Bible) clear to people in the group.
 - C. That God will help you as you lead
2. Personally prepare for the LifeGroup Discussion by:
 - A. Reading through this LifeGuide and becoming familiar with the content.
 - B. Make sure you take time to read and study the Scripture that is used in this LifeGuide.
3. Create a positive LifeGroup Environment by:
 - A. Serving Food! (Snacks or a meal – rotate who provides) - *optional
 - B. Arranging the seating where everyone can see everyone's face
 - C. Setting the room temperature @ 69 degrees (cold keeps them awake)
 - D. Placing pets in another room
 - E. Supervising and placing children in a remote room
 - F. Keeping room bright with natural and artificial lighting
 - G. Having light/fun music playing (low to medium sound volume)
 - H. Having pens available
 - I. Keeping extra Bibles on hand
 - J. Making sure everyone knows each other
 - K. Making sure you don't go too long. (Try aiming for 30 minutes of fellowship at the beginning and 1 hour of group time.)

Now you are ready for group time!

LifeGuide for Crazy Love – What does your life say?

Ice Breakers

Use one or more of the following “Ice Breakers” to get them talking:

- A. *What is the craziest storm or natural phenomenon that you have experienced?*
- B. *What is the craziest sporting event you have attended?*
- C. *Who is the craziest neighbor you have experienced?*

Leader Tips:

Remember that the purpose of the ice breakers is to get everyone involved and ready to talk. Try to make this a natural transition into your Bible study time.

Setting the Stage

Leaders: The purpose of “setting the stage” is to effectively transition from the icebreakers to a discussion of the current weekend message. This section reminds everyone in your group of the overall theme and purpose of the sermon series, and gets their minds prepared for the subject matter.

Does something deep inside you long to break free from the status quo? The answer is not a longer list of do’s and don’ts. God’s crazy, relentless, all-powerful love calls us to a passionate, life-changing relationship with Him. What would happen if we loved God as much as He loved us? Come and see how radical love can be.

If we are going to talk about crazy love, we need to define what crazy looks like. Like everything else at Real Life, we find our definitions from the Scriptures. If we want to see what crazy love looks like, we need to search the Scriptures for examples of crazy love in action. The Bible is full of stories about men and women whom God loved passionately, and in return they loved Him and others with a relentless, crazy love.

As we search the Scriptures for these stories of crazy love, we are indebted to the author of Hebrews for summarizing some of these stories in chapter 11. In this amazing chapter about faith, we find a plethora of examples of great faith or crazy love that has been demonstrated over the centuries. We are thankful

that God has provided us with such great examples and instruction so we can possess a crazy love that brings Him the glory that He so richly deserves. If you will open your hearts and minds and be obedient to the truths of Scripture, you can also develop this crazy love that comes only from the power of Christ.

Background and Context

Hebrews:

Author – The author of Hebrews never clearly identifies himself. Some have attributed the book to Barnabas or Paul while others believe it was more likely written by Luke or Apollos. Most scholars today concede that the author remains anonymous.

Audience – The assumption based on the title and internal evidence is that this letter was intended for mainly Jewish Christians.

Theme – The Supremacy of Christ

Purpose – Hebrews is best understood as a sermon letter meant to be read as a single sermon.

Discussion Time

Leaders: Let me take a moment to make you aware of the content found in each LifeGuide, and how you can use it. Remember this is a “guide” so you should not feel compelled to read every word and follow it in perfect order. Basically, I want this guide to provide you Scripture that you can read and study together, explanation and commentary, and discussion questions to get the group talking. The questions are bulleted so that you can locate them easily. The guide does provide you with a general flow for the evening, but you are free to adapt the guide to the needs of your group. You are always welcome to call or email me if you have any questions. Please don’t feel like you are bothering me. It’s my pleasure and my job to help you.

Have someone or several people in your group read Hebrews 11 – 12:1-2. It’s a long read, but well worth it for your group.

- What are some ways that you have lived out crazy love this last week?
- Have you discovered anything new about the people mentioned in Hebrews 11?
- Why do you think it is important to study the Old Testament narratives?

Remind your group of how we are defining crazy for this sermon series. Crazy love does not mean foolish love. You can be intensely involved, excited, outrageous, and all in without being foolish and careless. We want to challenge each other to live out a crazy love that is under the sovereign control of our amazing God.

Crazy - intensely involved, excited, outrageous, all in.

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith (Hebrews 11:7)

Why was Noah so crazy?

1. Noah was crazy because of Grace

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.
(Genesis 6:8)

A. Noah was not Perfect he was just like Us!

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

Have someone read Genesis 6:5-10. Make sure your group is familiar with the Noah story. It's a popular children's story, but people may not be aware of how long it took Noah to build the ark, and how long it rained.

- Why do you think God chose Noah and his family to be saved from the flood?
- How would you describe grace to someone who is not a believer? Or parents how would you describe grace to your kids?
- How is grace different from mercy?
- What is so amazing about grace to you?
- Can you remember the time that God found favor in you and decided to give you grace?

2. Noah was crazy because of What he knew.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6)

- What did Noah know that compelled him to build a huge boat?
- If everyone else knew and believed what Noah did, what would they all be doing?
- Why was Noah seen as a crazy person by his culture? You could argue that Noah was the only sane person right?
- What do you know about God?
- What do you know about the future?
- How should your knowledge of God and the future affect the way you are living right now?
- Why do some many people tend to live in the past more than living for the present and the future?
- Is there something in your past that you have a hard time getting over?

What did grace and knowledge produce?

3. Crazy Love

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets . (Matthew 22:36-40)

For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead (James 2:26)

Will it ever Rain?

When it finally rained, Noah got to see God come through on His promise. Noah must have endured some harsh ridicule over the years that he was building the ark. Even though mankind was about to die, there had to have been a sense of satisfaction for Noah and his family.

As broken and painful as our world is right now, there is coming a day when it will rain again. God will punish the wicked and uphold the righteous. He will end sin and death once and for all. We have this knowledge as believers and that should radically change our lives.

- How should grace and knowledge affect the way we view our world?
- Why should our lives as believers be considered normal while the rest of the world should be considered crazy?
- Knowing that Noah was flawed like you, how does that affect the way you see yourself?
- Do you think that God can use you despite yourself?
- Are you willing to let God use you?

Wrap Up

Sum up the lesson by re-capping the main point and challenge the group to apply the truth to their life this week.

1. Ask for praise reports from previous prayer requests
2. Ask for prayer requests
3. Ask each person (or couple) to volunteer for part of next week's meal/snack.
4. Make any announcements
5. Close with prayer and praise

☺ Let me know if you have any questions.

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