

Small Group Study Guide

A Focus on What Matters Most

Matthew 6:19-24

From Sunday September 12th, 2021

Take a moment to pray for the Lord to still your mind, as well as direct your thoughts, conversation and response to the study.

Appetizer:

Question: Have a couple people talk about a game or sport they like to play. Ask them to explain to the group how the game works, as if the group has never heard of it before. After the person explains the game, quiz the group, based on what they have heard (versus what they already may know) on the following details:

1. What is the point of the game?
2. How do you win?
3. What skills do you need to win?
4. What are the biggest obstacles to winning the game.

Main Course:

Ask the group this question: What matters most in the Christian Life? (There are lots of answers, or ways of saying the same thing, but it's just interesting what people may say).

Read: John 17:3

Comment: Eternal life is often assumed to only be talking about what happens after we die. The problem with this is that we associate knowing God simply to a rescue plan to escape punishment or death. But the word is so much more significant in the Greek language, where it speaks to an everlasting abundance: something that isn't just reserved for life after death. Jesus tipped his hat to this idea when in John 10:10 he said that he came to bring life, more life, and more abundantly.

Question: So what does Jesus say in John 17:3 is the abundant, everlasting life? How does this affect our focus?

Read: Philippians 3:7-10

Discussion: Reflect on this passage. What words stand out to you, or give you pause? How does Paul's passion appeal to you? Does it rattle you?

Question: Paul basically considers "all things" rubbish. What kind of things get in our way of knowing Jesus as our primary focus?

Question: Can religious concerns, topics, and practices get in the way of knowing Jesus? How?

Dessert:

Emmanuel church is about making disciples at all stages of life. Disciple-making is not just about classroom instruction. It's about living a Jesus shaped life in how we connect with God (Grow), walk alongside fellow believers in mentoring relationships (belong), and demonstrating to the world what Jesus looks like (share).

The Fall challenge at Emmanuel is for all of us to commit to a positive, united focus on living out our relationship with God together.

Take a moment to reflect on that phrase. What does a positive relationship with God look like? What does a united relationship with God look like? And what activities should we pursue in order to grow our relationship with God together this year (especially in light of Belonging, growing, and sharing?

Challenge to the group:

We commit to:

Make every moment an encounter. What are ways we can encourage each other to always be paying attention to what God is up to in our lives?

Every Person a Friend. What are some ways we can dignify the people we come across, helping either the lonely, the stranger, or the new person? Can we identify them?

Every Neighbourhood has a pastor. Let's brainstorm on how we can collectively and practically engage with people who live closest to us that don't know Jesus. Is there something tangible we can commit to (a personal habit, or connection or

event) as a group or as individuals that we can hold ourselves accountable to?

Closing in prayer:

Although it may feel a little different, encourage the group out loud to say the following Scripture verse:

**It's not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit,
says the Lord. Zechariah 4:6**

Repeat this three times and then have everyone take a moment and pray a blessing for the person beside them (breaking into groups of 2)