



Dear LifeGroup Leader,

So this week's Praxis is a bit out there, and a bit difficult to explain.

The main idea that's important this week is that our choices are ALWAYS determined by a certain belief about the world. For example, someone who says to themselves, "others are competitive and threatened by my doing well" is going to make different choices than someone who believes, "others are happy to see me do well, and my growth contributes to their growth".

The thing is, we don't often choose which beliefs we have. Our experiences, culture, and parenting serve as voices that echo inside our heads. Our beliefs are often tied to a specific face, a specific voice.

The Praxis this week aims to make conscious some of those influences, so that we can see more clearly fishbowls in which we make the decisions in our lives. The 3 categories I chose, money, relationships, and food, aren't as important as the task of pulling apart a very unconscious process.

I hope as you do you can show grace to one another. Over all things, place each other at the center of this time - not the LifeGroup Note, not even the Bible - for we worship a God who is present in our midst and longing for us to know Him deeper.

-Connor



(in)Formation

Forming our Choices

In our complicated lives, it's hard to find solutions. We often turn to something "new" in hopes that this will give us the clarity to move forward. Yet instead we can get mired in a sea of equal and frustrating paths. For James, the way forward is in raw practicality forged from Biblical idealism. It is no good to believe in something if it doesn't impact on the choices we make. James uses the story of Abraham, who had the right beliefs, and Rahab, who didn't, to show how our choices are at the center of what is righteous. It is our response to God's presence in our lives that counts, and that brings us into the life God desires for us.

FOCAL POINT: Paradoxically, our choices need to be limited to within the vision of the Kingdom of God if we are to live in freedom.



Getting Started

Catch up together about how your week has been, possibly also revisit last week's meeting.

- ▶ In your life right now, what is something hard for you to say "no" to?



Exploring Scripture

Read the following passage together.

James 2:14-26

- ▶ What words stick out to you?
- ▶ Where do you hear God's heart in this passage?



Reflection

Take time to reflect together about the passage.



Praxis

With the understanding that we gathered here are the body of Christ, let's allow the truth from today's scripture to impact us as a LifeGroup.

- ▶ Our behaviors and choices are organized by our beliefs. While our belief in God might organize what we do on Sundays, or how we spend our money (for example), there might be other beliefs that organize other parts of our lives and dictate what kinds of choices and habits we have. Let's take time to visualize our lives in this way so that more of our lives might be lived from within the freedom of God's Kingdom.
- ▶ Draw 3 large circles on a piece of paper. Each of these circles is a fishbowl, of sorts. Label each bowl "money", "relationships", and "food" (if you'd like to pick different categories, please feel free to be creative). Around the boarder of the bowl, write down the names of people that contribute to how you think about this area of your life.
- ▶ Considering each person written around the circles, ask yourself, "what does this person believe about the world?". Then ask yourself, how does God's heart line up with these voices?
- ▶ Share with each other.



Moving Outward

Challenge each other to live out God's truth this week.

- ▶ If you were living more fully within the fishbowl of God's Kingdom, what's one thing you'd do differently tomorrow?

James 2:14-26

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.