



Silverdale Baptist

Small Groups Sunday

Proverbs 12:26, 22:24-25; 1 Peter 4:10; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:3-4
08/12-13/2023

Leader note: This week we are using Pastor Matty Finlay's outline for the small group notes.

Big Idea

Small groups are God's tool to shape us and use us to help others grow.

Getting Started

One of the most popular sitcoms in the 1980s was **Cheers**. The show revolved around a handful of characters who frequented the bar by that name. The theme song, **Where everybody knows your name**, said it all. Like all of us, the characters wanted to be somewhere they were known and loved.

*Makin' your way in the world today
takes everything you've got.
Takin' a break from all your worries
sure, would help a lot.
Wouldn't you like to get away?
Sometimes you wanna go
Where everybody knows your name
And they're always glad you came
You wanna be where you can see
Our troubles are all the same
You wanna be where everybody knows your name*

Cheers was the world's version of a small group. Silverdale's small groups are better.

The desire for community is powerful in all of us. We were created to exist in a community. In the community, we find encouragement and a place to encourage others. In Silverdale small groups, we have the opportunity to help people feel loved. In small groups, we help each other grow in Christ.

Learn

*Small Groups are not about you!
Small Groups are about how God wants to use you.*

- Pastor Matty

God wants to use you:

1. To move people from isolation to community

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 12:26; and 22:24-25.

How do these two verses help us understand the need for godly relationships?

How can being a part of a small group community help us be godly?

The best context for impacting others and holding each other accountable is a small group. We were created to do life in community. In the community, in a small group, we find accountability and encouragement. We hide in isolation, but we grow in community.

2. To serve people who are in need

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 4:10.

When we were born again, all of us received a spiritual gift. According to Peter, how are we to use our gifts?

My awareness of a need is my invitation to meet that need. - Pastor Matty

3. To comfort people who are hurting.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

The God of all comfort comforts us. Why?

Where can we find the opportunity to comfort others?

In small groups, we get to know each other, help each other, and meet each other's needs. We all face grief and trouble in this world. And one of our needs is comfort when we are hurting. In small groups, we comfort one another with the comfort we have received from God.

4. To support people with heavy loads.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 6:2 and PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

How do these verses help us understand the need to support others?

Apply

Among other things, God uses small groups to move people from isolation to community. And in community, we have the opportunity to serve people in need, to comfort people who are hurting, and to come alongside people with heavy loads.

“Watch to see where God is working and join Him in His work” – Henry Blackaby

How are you seeing God at work in your small group?

Who can you invite to your small group so they can see God at work and join Him?

Will you ask God if He wants you to start a small group?

Pray

Father, thank You for the reminder that You are at work in small groups. Help us join in what You are doing. Would you raise up more small group leaders here at Silverdale? In Jesus' name, amen.

Dig Deeper

Proverbs 12:26. One should be cautious in both speech and the choosing of friends (vv.26)¹ Careful people show their caution both in the words they speak and the friends they choose (vv. 23, 26)²

Proverbs 22:24–25. This could be taken to mean simply that if one associates with quarrelsome people, one will become like them and get into trouble. On the other hand, as in 1:10–19 it may be that the reader is warned to stay clear of criminal enticements. The word translated “ensnared” also

¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 14 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 133.

² Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 14 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 134.

can mean “bait,” and the “bait” of the criminal is the enticement of easy money. Either way, the point is that one should be careful about choosing friends because they inevitably affect one’s character. Something of the nature of Proverbs comes out here as well. Few things can cause parents as much anxiety as their child’s choice of companions.³

1 Peter 4:10. The theme of ministering to one another continues, but the emphasis shifts to gifts believers have received by God’s grace. The word “gift” (*charisma*) implies that the gifts believers have are the result of God’s grace, and the word “received” confirms this judgment. Paul used the term “gift” (*charisma*) quite often to designate spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30–31; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). Believers cannot boast about the gift they have, for otherwise they contradict its gracious character, thinking that somehow they merit its bestowal. The gifts are manifestations of “God’s grace in its various forms.” It is also implied that each believer has received at least one spiritual gift, for Peter addressed his words to “each one” (*hekastos*). The notion that God has granted charismatic gifts to each believer is also Pauline (1 Cor 12:7). Even though every believer possesses at least one gift, the gifts are not necessarily the same. God’s grace manifests itself “in its various forms,” so that the diversity of gifts reveals the multifaceted character of God’s grace. What is most important, of course, is the purpose for having gifts. Gifts are not given so that believers can congratulate themselves on their abilities. They are bestowed “to serve others.” The word used here can be translated “ministering” (*diakonountes*). The term “serving” can be used in a variety of ways—of providing meals (Matt 8:15; Mark 1:31; Luke 4:39; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; John 12:2; Acts 6:2), of visiting those in prison (Matt 25:44; 2 Tim 1:18), of providing financial support (Luke 8:3; Rom 15:25; 2 Cor 8:19, 20), and in more general terms as well (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26–27; John 12:26; Acts 19:22; 2 Cor 3:3; 1 Tim 3:10, 13; Phlm 13; Heb 6:10). The point is that spiritual gifts are given to serve and to help others, to strengthen others in the faith. They are bestowed for ministry, not to enhance self-esteem. Paul emphasized the same theme, reminding believers that gifts are given to build up and edify others, not to edify oneself (1 Cor 12:7, 25–26; 14:1–19, 26; Eph 4:11–12). When believers use their gifts to strengthen others, they are functioning as “good stewards” (NRSV, *kaloï oikonomoi*) of God’s grace. The word translated “stewards” could also be translated as “managers” (cf. Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; 1 Cor 4:1–2; cf. Gal 4:2; Titus 1:7), as long as it is clear that believers hold these gifts in trust since they are gifts of God. Spiritual gifts are not fundamentally a privilege but a responsibility, a call to be faithful to what God has bestowed.⁴

2 Corinthians 1

He permits the trials to come. There are ten basic words for suffering in the Greek language, and Paul used five of them in this letter. The most frequently used word is *thlipsis*, which means “narrow, confined, under pressure,” and in this letter is translated *affliction* (2 Cor. 2:4; 4:17), *tribulation* (2 Cor. 1:4), and *trouble* (2 Cor. 1:4, 8). Paul felt hemmed in by difficult circumstances, and the only way he could look was up.

In 2 Corinthians 1:5–6, Paul used the word *pathema*, “suffering,” which was also used for the sufferings of our Saviour (1 Peter 1:11; 5:1). There are some sufferings that we endure simply because

³ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 14 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 194–195.

⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 213–214.

we are human and subject to pain; but there are other sufferings that come because we are God's people and want to serve Him.

We must never think that trouble is an accident. For the believer, everything is a divine appointment. There are only three possible outlooks a person can take when it comes to the trials of life. If our trials are the products of "fate" or "chance," then our only recourse is to give up. Nobody can control fate or chance. If we have to control everything ourselves, then the situation is equally as hopeless. But if *God* is in control, and we trust Him, then we can overcome circumstances with His help.

God encourages us in all our tribulations by teaching us from His Word that it is He who permits trials to come.⁵

Galatians 6:2. *The Reality of Burdens.* All Christians have burdens. Our burdens may differ in size and shape and will vary in kind depending on the providential ordering of our lives. For some it is the burden of temptation and the consequences of a moral lapse, as in v. 1 here. For others it may be a physical ailment, or mental disorder, or family crisis, or lack of employment, or demonic oppression, or a host of other things; but no Christian is exempt from burdens. Creation itself is broken and groaning, and believers groan with it, waiting for the final deliverance that will come only with the return of our Redeemer in glory (Rom 8:18–28). Prosperity gospels of easy believism and quick-fix recovery belong more to the spirit of this age than to the Spirit of Christ, who "Son though he was, had to prove the meaning of obedience through all that he suffered" (Heb 5:9).

The Myth of Self-sufficiency. We all have burdens, and God does not intend for us to carry them by ourselves in isolation from our brothers and sisters. The ancient philosophy of Stoicism taught that the goal of the happy life was *apatheia*, a studied aloofness from pleasure and pain, and self-sufficiency, the ability to brave the harsh elements of life without dependence upon others. As the Roman philosopher Seneca put it, "The primary sign of a well-ordered mind is a man's ability to remain in one place and linger in his own company." But there is a vast difference between Stoic equanimity and Christian courage. The myth of self-sufficiency is not a mark of bravery but rather a sign of pride.⁶

Philippians 2:3. The second measurement is humility. Paul expressed this both negatively and positively. Negatively, the Philippians were to avoid "selfish ambition" and "vain conceit." Selfish ambition motivated the preachers Paul described in 1:17. Perhaps that was fresh in his mind. It led him to think about conceit, a seeking of glory which is, in reality, empty because it focuses on the individual rather than on the Lord. The positive side corrects improper attitudes. They were to act in humility. Before the New Testament era, the word "humility" had a negative connotation. The adjective related to it "was frequently employed, and especially so, to describe the mentality of a slave. It conveyed the ideas of being base, unfit, shabby, mean, of no account. Hence 'humility' could not have been regarded by the pagan as a virtue to be sought after."¹²⁴

Nonetheless, "humility" introduces a key theme of the passage. Paul further described it in 2:3 and 2:5–11. He urged the Philippians literally to "count others as excelling over themselves." This also relates to the mind and values. The word "excelling" ("better," NIV) occurs in 3:8, where the pursuit of Christ excels anything Paul had before he engaged in it. The word "consider" occurs in the hymn to Christ (2:6), as does the word for "humbled" (2:8). Since the model of Christ loomed in Paul's mind, Christ's actions provided the necessary motivation. Christ's humility is the standard for evaluating the worth of others

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 629.

⁶ Timothy George, [Galatians](#), vol. 30 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 413–414.

and actions toward them. This does not mean that personal concerns should be overlooked. Elsewhere Paul clearly stated that Christians must take care of their own affairs as an act of love for the congregation (1 Thess 4:9–12). The next verse implies the same truth. Humility begins with a realistic appraisal of oneself and others as being in the image of God. This relates intimately to the next characteristic, where the topic is continued.¹²⁶

2:4 The third measurement is consideration. The Philippians were to “look out” for others’ interests as well as their own. Some Greek texts insert the word “also” in this sentence so that it reads “also the things of others.” This may reflect an early interpretation, and it surely is a correct inference. Some then interpret this exhortation to mean that the church is to focus on the good qualities of others in the church. A way to unity, then, is watching to see how God works in others the qualities he desires in everyone. The focus shifts to others rather than personal spiritual qualities. The interpretation is attractive. It answers the problem of self-centeredness and false glory. It also does not relieve Christians of an obligation to care for their own things. It expresses the dynamics of church relationships and fits the example of Christ. In reading the text, however, it seems that Paul had more in mind. A natural reading suggests a broader reference point than merely spiritual qualities. Any concerns of others were to become the concerns of all! The Philippians were to imitate Christ, and it seems unlikely that Christ focused on the good spiritual qualities of the people for whom he left heaven. He died in spite of the fact that they were not spiritually attractive.⁷

⁷ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 94–95.