

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide – Trail Markers Week #1

Love / April 11, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | Would You Rather...
 - ... for your birthday, receive cash or gifts?
 - ... go to a movie alone or to dinner alone?
 - ... hear the good news or the bad news first?
 - ... be given a lifetime supply of delicious food or books?
 - ... watch a big sporting event at home or live at the stadium?
2. What are you looking forward to in your Community Group for the Spring Quarter?
3. Share briefly about a person you know who embodies the Holy Spirit-enabled fruit of love. How has this person's love and presence in your life impacted you?
4. If your group is new, or you're an existing group welcoming new members, getting to know each other's personal story/background is a fantastic place to start building community. While there are many ways you can do this, here's a simple structure you can use: The "2x4" Story – Spend two minutes talking about four aspects of your life: family of origin, current family, spiritual journey, and desired future.

DIVING DEEPER

5. Our new series Trail Markers: Evidence of a Spirit-Led Life is a study on the fruit of the Spirit from the book of Galatians. The core passage of Scripture for the series is Galatians 5:16-23. Read through that passage together and discuss the corresponding questions.

Galatians 5:16-23 (NLT) – ¹⁶So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. ¹⁹When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. ²²But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

- a) As you read through this passage, what stood out to you?
 - b) Since becoming a follower of Jesus, which fruit of the Spirit has developed the most? Which fruit has manifested in a way that would shock those who knew you before you became a Christian?
 - c) Which fruit of the Spirit are you most excited to study and apply in greater depth? Explain why.
6. Pastor Paul shared that the Greek word used for love in Galatians 5:22 is *agapē*. This word reflects the divine love that God has for us. Read 1 John 4:7-17 together and discuss the corresponding questions.
- 1 John 4:7-17 (NLT)** – ⁷Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹²No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. ¹³And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. ¹⁴Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.
- a) How does the Apostle John define God’s divine love and how God demonstrates that love?
 - b) The chief ingredient of God’s divine love is self-sacrifice for the benefit of the one loved. Is self-sacrifice an aspect of love you see championed in today’s popular culture? If not, what do you believe has replaced it as a core part of the meaning of love?
 - c) According to this passage, in response to God’s divine love for us, what are we to do? How would you evaluate yourself in this aspect of following Jesus?

TAKING IT HOME

7. Pastor Paul taught that fruitfulness only comes from rootedness. In other words, the fruit of the Spirit are the result of a dependance upon God working to grow these character qualities in our life.

Over the course of the next nine weeks (the length of the Trail Markers series), how can you position yourself to be more deeply connected with God? Perhaps it's readjusting your schedule to make time to spend with God reading the Bible; realigning your heart when you come before God; developing a greater willingness to listen for God's voice when you pray; deciding to obey God with something you've known for a while that He's been calling you to do; or confessing your sins and asking for forgiveness.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) – ⁶And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. ⁷Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. 2021 Men's Conference | There is a desire in all men to be better and do more, but an extraordinary life isn't found sitting on the sidelines. Men, hang out with us on Saturday June 12th at Men's Conference for a day of spiritual renewal, motivating messages from Mark Driscoll and yes, some manly fun. Lunch and dinner are provided with your ticket purchase. To learn more and purchase a ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-mens-conference-tickets-143828790785?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.
2. Growth Track – Now Online | Looking to experience the extraordinary life found in Jesus? We've moved our Growth Track classes online so you can engage with them on your own schedule. Learn more and take the classes by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/growth-track/>.
3. Rivers Crossing Worship | Since last Fall, Rivers Crossing Worship has released three original singles – Remember, Just A Moment, and In The Name Of Jesus. You can listen to those songs by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/worship/>.
4. Plan A Visit | Have an individual or family you want to invite to Rivers Crossing? If so, we'd love for them to utilize our Plan A Visit tool. Share this link with them: <https://connect-card.com/zTE3I3TXmFG0TgizStLj>.



COMMUNITY GROUP MISSION & VISION

Groups Mission:

To provide people an opportunity to experience loving community as they pursue becoming a fully engaged follower of Christ.

Community Groups Vision:

To gather together regularly to share, study the Bible, and support one another. Community Groups are sermon-based, meaning they study a set of Bible passages and questions connected to the previous weekend's sermon.

Healthy Community Groups:

Community Groups are designed so that we can love and care for one another and put God's Word into action – all in pursuit of experiencing and living the extraordinary life. As you lead, keep the following in mind for evaluating the health of your group:

- **ENGAGE:** Groups are only successful when people invest their time and energy to genuinely engage the process by attending regularly, being honest, and developing relationship with other group members. This takes time, but it's worth it.
 - *Acts 2:42-27, Colossians 3:12-17*
- **ENCOURAGE:** One of the primary roles your group will play is in encouraging one another forward in your individual walks with Christ. This includes supporting one another through the messiness and trials of life.
 - *Hebrews 10: 23-25*
- **EQUIP:** Regularly encountering God's Word through the sermon, group discussion, and personal study will, over time, equip each group member to be a more fully engaged follower of Jesus. As this information permeates the heart, the Holy Spirit will provide application and personal growth.
 - *2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 14:25-26*
- **EMPOWER:** As your group meets, you will see some people naturally begin to exhibit spiritual gifts including leadership, shepherding, and hospitality. Be on the lookout for these developments. Empower these individuals to step into larger roles within the group, to consider leading or hosting their own group, or to serve where led.
 - *Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:10-14*
- **EXPAND:** As each member of your group begins to invest in their "8 to 15," it's natural for your group to add new members and to connect others into groups ministry.
 - *John 13:34-35*