

Let's Go Group Studies Leader's Notes

1. We're providing this material to you to remove some of the stress and frustration of developing a plan to lead a specific group study. It isn't meant to replace your individual preparation to lead. Our hope is that you would use it as a guide to your engagement with the text and the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead you as you help your study's participants to have their own relevant encounter with scripture and the Holy Spirit.
2. This plan isn't meant to constrain you to lead in any specific way. Please feel free to modify it to better meet the needs of your group and to honor your gifting and authentic style. For example, when and how you pray and share prayer needs should be in a rhythm that is good for your group as long as you are praying as a group. For another, who reads it and how scripture is read should fit your group and its needs as long as it is read somehow.
3. Be authentic. If you find yourself saying "They are asking" as in, 'I didn't write this question and I don't really understand why it is being asked.' Don't ask it. Ask something else. It is okay not to understand everything. No one understands everything. If you don't believe in what you're saying, why should anyone else believe it? One way to turn this into a positive is to admit to the group that you are struggling with figuring out a particular bit and allow someone else to contribute their God-given wisdom.
4. Some questions, especially earlier in the study, aren't meant to be a mile deep or transformative. These questions are intended to prompt the participants to notice what is there. It gives them a way to begin to care about the specific words on the page.
5. Portions of the plan in quotes are meant to be spoken out loud to the group as in, "Who is buried in Grant's Tomb?" You don't have to repeat the question or statement exactly as it appears. Say it in a way that feels comfortable and natural for you.
6. Portions of the plan in *italics* are meant to be notes to you that you can use as prompts in aiding group discussion. They aren't the definitive answer but should be a good possible answer.
7. The last page is the participant handout.

Let's Go- Unpardonable Sin

- 1) Scripture: Mark 3:22-30, Matt 12:31-32.
 - a) *Parallel accounts. Matt. 12:22-32; Luke 11:14-23; 12:10.*
- 2) Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should be able to recognize and describe what Jesus specifically teaches is the unforgiveable sin.
- 3) Resources: Book of Mark, Grassmick. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Walvoord & Zuck, Copyright 1983, 2003, 2004 by Cook Communications Ministries
- 4) Preparation:
 - a) Pray for guidance
 - b) Read entire lesson plan
- 5) Prayer requests & Open in prayer
- 6) Intro:
 - a) "In this week's study we need to acknowledge that this is one of the most difficult points in scripture and in the theology of the church. If we decide that some sin is unpardonable, does that make someone beyond the redemption of Christ? Are they, in fact, beyond salvation and without hope? Given the difficulty and importance of this subject, I ask all of us to carefully examine the context, the speaker, the subject and especially the immediate audience of Jesus' parable.
 - b) When we are done, each of us should be able to recognize and describe what Jesus specifically teaches is the unforgiveable sin."
- 7) The study
 - a) Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 3:22. ***The accusation***
 - b) Ask everyone to complete question 1 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
 - i) "What accusation is being made here and who is making it?" *Jesus power to cast out demons comes from Satan. Scribes make the accusation.*
 - c) Ask "From the passage, how do the scribes, teachers of the religious law, justify their accusation?" *Do the scribes offer evidence or witnesses of unlawful behavior or do they just assert the charge against Jesus?*
 - d) Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 3:22-27. ***The parable***
 - e) Ask everyone to complete question 2 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

- i) "What does this passage tell you about Satan and what does it tell you about Jesus?" *It is logically inconsistent and ultimately self-defeating for Satan to intentionally act against his own interests. Satan is a strong man. As the one who has been casting out demons, Jesus shows his absolute authority and power over a strong man like Satan and is able to 'plunder his house.'* See *John 10:29* about who can steal from God's hand.
- f) Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 3:28-30. ***The judgement***
- g) "Its time to be very careful about context and examine closely what is actually said.
 - i) "Who is Jesus telling the scribes they have actually accused in verse 22?" *The Holy Spirit. Compare Luke 12:10.*
 - ii) "From your own studies, do you believe the scribes accusing Jesus and plotting against him was an isolated instance?" *The scribes accusing Jesus of heretical beliefs and unlawful behavior is one of the most common facets of his ministry and reach their culmination in Mark 11:18 and Jesus subsequent trial and execution.*
 - iii) "Who, in this passage, is declared guilty of this unpardonable sin?" *No one.*
 - iv) If someone can be guilty of the unpardonable sin who would that be? How would you describe that person?" *Repeatedly accusing the Holy Spirit that he is Satanic or is working with Satan or under Satan's authority. This isn't a carelessly spoken word but a pattern of belief and behavior that hardens a heart against God in such a way that God will finally not redeem it. Compare Pharoah when confronted by Moses and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.*
- h) Ask for a volunteer to read Matt 12:31-32.
- i) Ask "What are the consequences of this sin?" *Remaining unforgiven for eternity.*
- j) Ask everyone to complete question 3 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
 - i) "How might we recognize, in ourselves and in those we love, beliefs and behaviors that are pointing down the road of unpardonable sin? How is how we confront this in ourselves different from how we confront this in others?" *Ideally, these answers come from the participants. Whether they get them from the study, the Sunday sermon or elsewhere, the best thing that can happen here is they are verbalized by the participants.*
- k) Ask for a volunteer to read John 5:24.
- l) Ask everyone to complete question 4 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

- i) “John 5:24 is explicitly clear that a believer in Christ is personally and eternally secure in their salvation. Our salvation is mutually exclusive with being or becoming unforgiveable. If the sin that you’ve always thought of as unforgiveable isn’t what Jesus calls unforgiveable, will you fully accept and thank God for that forgiveness tonight?” *Same plan here.*
- m) Ask everyone to complete question 5 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
 - i) “How can accepting that you are completely forgiven release you for ministry this week?” *And here.*
- 8) Summary:
 - a) You can briefly recap main points raised in the discussion or you can affirm and encourage the lessons and applications the participants developed.
 - b) Close in prayer

Let's Go- Unpardonable Sin

Mark 3:22-30

- 1) From the passage, how do the scribes, teachers of the religious law, justify their accusation?

- 2) What does this passage tell you about Satan and what does it tell you about Jesus?

- 3) How might we recognize, in ourselves and in those we love, beliefs and behaviors that are pointing down the road of unpardonable sin? How is how we confront this in ourselves different from how we confront this in others?

- 4) John 5:24 is explicitly clear that a believer in Christ is personally and eternally secure in their salvation. Our salvation is mutually exclusive with being or becoming unforgiveable. If the sin that you've always thought of as unforgiveable isn't what Jesus calls unforgiveable, will you fully accept and thank God for that forgiveness tonight?

- 5) How can accepting that you are completely forgiven release you for ministry this week?

For next time... Read Mark 3:31-35