

lifegroup

resource guide

for the week of 17 September

*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.*

*(2 Corinthians 13.5)*

An equinox and solstice, while frequently associated, are literally poles apart. An equinox is when the equator is closest to the sun and a solstice is when the equator is furthest away. This is not merely a tidbit of science trivia — equinoxes and solstices impact our lives every year because we mark the four seasons from these four events... and with each season comes memories, associations and expectations — both joyful and sorrowful.

On 22 September the Autumnal Equinox will occur marking the first day of the Fall season—a season marked by our equator being closest to the sun. I choose to receive it as a prophetic promise that God intends for this to be a season where we will be brought closer to Him. Therefore, this is a good time to pause and take inventory less we simply let obligation and/or habit dictate what our lives will be filled with.

*1. Am I taking anything/anyone for granted?* What we take for granted we perceive as entitlements rather than gifts and blessings from God to cherish.

*2. Am I using my time wisely?* Am I getting enough sleep? Am I bored? Am I growing my mind? Am I exercising my body? Am I using my skills purposely? Am I taking a full 24-hour sabbath?

*3. Am I waking up in the morning with anticipation or dread?* Hope or hopelessness? Fulfillment or futility? The emotion we wake with says a lot about our state of mind, heart, and spirit.

*4. Am I living my life congruent with my faith and values?* An incongruent life is doomed to breed dissatisfaction and disconnection with God that will infect our perspective and poison our relationships.

*5. Am I taking care of myself physically?* An out of shape and exhausted life will impact our energy, our physical health, and our mental outlook. It is not an issue of looks it is an issue of well-being.

*6. Am I intentional in my relationships?* Life-long, life-giving community and friendships do not just happen. They require our effort, mindfulness, and time.

*7. Am I letting circumstances and/or people beyond my control stress me out?* Our media creates addictions around outrage and disaffection. Then there are lives we long to influence but cannot. These are emotionally and physically deadly. How can you let go of what you cannot control?

*8. Am I achieving my goals?* We all need goals to challenge us and move us forward. I am fond of the quote: “Those who do not move do not notice their chains.”

Dear ones, I believe God desires all of us to embrace Fall 2018 as an opportune season to be brought near to God as we live, love, and labor in the fullness of His presence. May 22 September mark the beginning of a spiritual equinox for all of us.

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

What was your favorite song, book, and/or movie of the summer? Why?

Getting to know one another…

Reading Scripture together…

Deuteronomy 5: God speaks

*Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. 2 “The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. 3 “The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today. 4 “The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, 5 while I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said,*

*6   ‘I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

*7   ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.*

*8   ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 9 ‘You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

*11   ‘You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.*

*12   ‘Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. 13 ‘Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. 15 ‘You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.*

*16   ‘Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.*

*17   ‘You shall not murder.*

*18   ‘You shall not commit adultery.*

*19   ‘You shall not steal.*

*20   ‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

*21   ‘You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.’*

*22   “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. 23 “And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 “You said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. 25 ‘Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die. 26 ‘For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?*   
*27 ‘Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.’*

*28   “The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. 29 ‘Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! 30 ‘Go, say to them, “Return to your tents.” 31 ‘But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I give them to possess.’ 32 “So you shall observe to*

*do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. 33 “You shall walk in all the way which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you will possess.*

Read Deuteronomy 5. What are your observations? What stands out to you?

What do we learn about God in this chapter?

In your opinion, what is the unifying theme of this chapter?

What commandment represents the greatest challenge for you?

How do we reconcile commandments and grace?

Anticipating our future together...

We are all different! We have different temperaments, experiences, gifts, and strengths. Yet, Jesus wants to bring us together to experience genuine community that includes friendship and authentic spiritual growth. Community does not “just happen”. It requires intentionality. LifeGroups are for those who want to build and experience community that gathers in expectation that Jesus is present and we will be too! Therefore, we have created the following expectations for our LifeGroups:

We will meet on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

We will arrive between \_\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_\_ and we will meet from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

We will make a 12 week commitment to our LifeGroup.

We will express our commitment by attending weekly, completing the Resource Guide beforehand, praying, participating in the discussion, and relationally engaging. We recognize that these are key to a healthy group!

We will make a commitment to pray for one another in our gatherings and outside of our group meetings.

What are your hopes and aspirations for participating in a LifeGroup?

What is one way that you would like to grow spiritually this Fall?

Prayer requests…

(write in advance what you want your group to pray for…)

Praying for my group…