

Life Group Leader Guide

Experiencing Christ – Week #4

(Suggested Format and Discussion Questions)

Fellowship and Food (15 minutes) – Groups with new members should continue to use name tags.

Welcome (10 minutes)

- Welcome everyone, introduce any newcomers, and open the meeting in prayer. Assign a group member to call missing group members to let them know they were missed.
- Confirm plans to gather as a group outside of your regular meeting for fun and fellowship. The goal is for each group to have at least one social gathering to foster relationships in Christ.
- Transition to Bible Study: Go around the circle and have each group member “Check-In” by describing how they are feeling in one-to-two words. This is not a time for questions or further explanation. Examples of answers are “busy”, “tired and discouraged”, “happy”, “plodding”, “excited and joyful”, “stressed”. This is a great way to get people to open up and to get an initial feel as a leader on the emotions of group members.

Bible Study (45 minutes) – Encourage group members to bring their Bible, sermon outline, and their Experiencing Christ Study Guide.

Read Col. 2:6-15, and then review the main points of the sermon outline.

1. **(When you were dead in your sins)** Read Col. 2:9 and 2:13-14. As wonderful as it is to know that in Christ is the very fullness of God in bodily form, we have to realize that not everyone has responded in faith to Jesus Christ. If you have not made that commitment to Christ, what stands in your way? If you have given your allegiance to Christ, put your faith in him, then what did you write on page 47 of the *Experiencing Christ Study Guide (My Response)* as the “when, why, and how” you received Christ Jesus?

Leader Notes: Quite a number of groups have one or more non-Christians participating. This first question is designed to get them to reflect on their need for salvation in Christ. If all present are known to be believers, then there is no problem in moving directly to the second half of the question.

2. **(Live in him)** Read Col. 2:6-7. No matter how long you have been a Christian, you have a responsibility to "continue to live in him" (Col. 2:6) and also to be "built up in him" (Col. 2:7). What kind of game plan do you have for making that so? Please be specific and include both individual and group settings.

Leader Notes: Be sure to help people get specific here. This is a great question to have everyone turn to someone who is not their spouse and answer.

3. **(Hollow philosophy)** Read Col. 2:8. In America the most common idea is that we may each live our lives in whatever manner pleases us. We can, this view says, believe what we wish. Some common ways of dealing with life would include reading astrology predictions, studying magic or evil spirits, visiting psychics, using crystals to focus energy, or even taking part in worship of the earth. What do you think about those ideas?

Leader Notes: Actually, none of the ideas in this paragraph is acceptable to Christ. Yet, we would probably be surprised at how many Christians read a horoscope or dabble in New Age ideas. The key test is whether these practices or beliefs are "according to Christ" (NKJV for Col. 2:9).

4. **(Fullness of God in bodily form)** Read Col. 2:9-10. Christ is not only Lord of the universe, but also Lord over every aspect of bodily, human life. He is the unique God-man. How does knowing his supremacy and his all-sufficiency impact the way we feel about him and the way we seek happiness in life?

5. **(Buried and Raised)** Read Col. 2:11-12. Recently we have seen some of our fellow believers undertake public baptism to demonstrate their faith in Christ. Have you taken that public step? If not, why not? And consider what these verses say about our being raised with Christ. How does that empower us to continue to walk "in him"?

Leader Notes: Please encourage anyone who was baptized as an infant or who has never been baptized as a believer to do so.

6. **(Forgiven!)** Read Col. 2:13. So, as Christians we have been forgiven for all our sins. But do you believe it? If you do, then have you forgiven yourself and others? By that standard of forgiveness, where are you in the process of accepting the forgiveness Christ has already won for you? If he has cancelled the entire debt of sin, why are you still trying to work it off?

Leader Notes: Christians want to believe their sin has been totally paid for by Christ, but some secretly doubt it is so. Some think that because it seems too good to be true, and others want a reason to blame themselves. One subtle reason that some Christians harbor the notion of unforgiven sin is that they do not want to forgive other Christians for

certain things.

7. **(Triumph in death!)** Read Col. 2:14-15. Christ did not say that sin is okay. Christ did not say that sin doesn't deserve death. He did not say that sin can be forgiven without any consequences. What Christ **did** say, was that he went to the cross to die for our sins. And then he rose to provide us the power to live for him. Now it's our turn to talk—what do **we** have to say in response to all that Christ has done?

Leader Notes: Great opportunity to answer this question with a corporate prayer time. Ask for many people to pray and give thanks for what they are thankful for.

Share and Prayer (30 minutes)

- Break into two groups (men and women).
- Go around to each person and ask for prayer requests and pray for each other. Be sure to include some accountability in the group around doing your work in the Experiencing Christ Study Guide and with the memory verses.