

# life groups

## **Message Review**

The message review is now in video format and can be found at [lifegj.org/groups](http://lifegj.org/groups) . We have found that the most awkward part of group meetings can often be the message review. Please try using the video review with your group and let us know what you think. (At the bottom you will find a condensed message review if needed but we're going to start off with discussion.)

## **Ice Breaker**

**What is something you wish you had given up on when you were younger? What is something you wish you hadn't given up on?**

**Your Take-aways: Discuss with your group your impression of the message, any new perspective you gained, or how this message challenged you.**

**Special Note :** Since this is our first week [back] at Life Groups this study guide is intentionally light on deeper study topics. Use the extra time this week getting to know any new group members, talking about the rhythm of your group's meetings, and enjoying each other's company.

## **Digging Deeper:**

**1.** In addressing the hurtful spiritual idea *If you have enough faith it will fix anything* Pastor Tim talked about having a right understanding of faith. He said that "faith is really about believing what God says and trusting Him enough to obey." Too often we put a lot of effort (faith) into trying to get God to do something He might not otherwise do.

**Is there a problem with "believing hard enough" to get God to come through for you?**

- If so, what is the problem?
- Is that manipulation?

**What does faith without manipulation look like?**

**2.** Have you ever witnessed a situation where someone felt they had absolute faith that God was going to step in and fix a situation, only to have Him do something different?

- **If so, how did that impact their walk with God and their ideas about faith?**
- **If you'd like to share, how has this impacted your walk with God?**

**3.** When he was addressing the hurtful spiritual idea *Everything happens for a reason* Pastor Tim talked about “happy talk.” Happy talk happens when people are trying to comfort or counsel someone who’s circumstances are confusing or difficult. In essence happy talk statements are well-meaning but hurtful cliches like:

- “God doesn’t make mistakes”
- “God must be up to something big.”
- “God wouldn’t give you more than you can handle.”
- “What you’re going through is just a blessing in disguise.”
- “Everything happens for a reason.”

**Have you ever been on the receiving end of well-meaning but hurtful cliches when you were confused or hurting?**

- **If so, how did it make you feel?**
- **If not, have you ever been tempted to use happy talk when you didn’t know what to say?**

**How can we help people who are hurting without using any happy talk? (What if we are confused about what’s happening too?)**

## **Bonus**

**How does doubt play into the conversation about faith?**

## **Take Home**

**We need to let go of some potentially hurtful christian cliches and learn to sit in discomfort with those who are hurting. We also need to remember that faith is not a tool to get what we want *from* God...instead it’s trust and obedience *to* God.**

## **Printed Message Review**

We launched a new series this weekend called *Mirage*. Just like a mirage in the desert, there are spiritual ideas that seem satisfying and true but are actually empty and untrue. In fact they can be hurtful.

This week we looked at three potentially hurtful spiritual ideas that are common in the Church.

- Following Jesus brings success.
- If you have enough faith it will fix anything.
- Everything happens for a reason.

Each of these ideas sound good but are, in fact, either a misunderstanding of what the Bible teaches or outright wrong.

We looked at an account in Acts 12 in which James is killed and Peter is imprisoned. God delivers Peter in the midst of the Church's prayers but they seem shocked that God would come through. If we compare consider the three hurtful spiritual ideas above while reading that story we see they don't seem to be true even for Jesus' closest disciples.

These dangerous spiritual ideas are often supported by Bible verses that are taken out of context. Context is the key to understanding Scripture. While Romans 8:28 does not actually tell us that *everything happens for a reason* it does teach us that God will use *everything that happens for our good*. In fact the context of that verse teaches us that nothing that happens in this life can separate us from God's love. *That* is the promise we ought to cling to.

We may need to let go of some things we've believed that are simply not true so that we can truly understand and love God in truth.