



Life Group Resource #5

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." ⁹"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. ¹⁰He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹²He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." ¹³They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.
Luke 22: 7-13

Every day we have choices. We decide what to wear, what to eat for breakfast and lunch, even whether or not we're on time for school. We choose friends, music, entertainment, and whether to do our homework or not. What television shows will we watch? What Internet sites will we access? The list goes on and on.

Let me tell you about a new friend of mine. I met Bubba a few days ago while reading Luke 22. In the passage, Jesus sends John and Peter to the city to make preparations for the Passover feast (The Last Supper). Jesus tells them to look for a guy carrying a water pot, and follow him to his master's house, and there they'd find the room where the Passover meal would be served. As I read, I became fascinated with the water-pot guy. I decided to name him "Bubba." Being from the south, I've always considered a guy named "Bubba" to be a friend. Bubba is your pal. He's dependable, always in the right place at the right time. He's the friend that you can count on. I like Bubba.

So what's so fascinating about Bubba? In the Scriptures, he has no name and he carries water. That is what is so intriguing to me. He is an ordinary guy who had to make choices. First he had to **Step Up**. Jesus had apparently already made arrangements for the use of this room. Even though Bubba was probably an indentured servant, I would like to think that he had met Jesus, and that he had made the choice to be the contact to bring the disciples to his master's house. With the turmoil of Jesus arriving in to Jerusalem that week there would have been people who wanted to keep an eye on those involved with Jesus. Their lives could even have been in danger. And since the supper with the disciples was very important to Jesus, he probably didn't want Judas tipping off the religious leaders early. Bubba made the choice to be the contact and guide. He chose to step up!

Second, Bubba chose to **Stand Out**. Jesus didn't have to describe what Bubba would have been wearing or at what particular place he would have been, because he was the only guy. In that day, guys did not carry water! That was the woman's job. Usually in the afternoon, women went to the well to gather water. If Bubba were the only guy that was carrying water, he surely would have stood out. He was willing to do his job. He was not ashamed! He chose to stand out!

Last of all Bubba was a **Servant**. He probably was an indentured servant but he also had a servant's heart. He was willing to carry the water. It was probably his job to wash the feet of the guests. Jesus took Bubba's place as the servant that night, as he washed the disciples' feet. Just like us, Bubba was an ordinary guy who played a simple but important part in service to Christ and others. Jesus took his place, just like He took our place on the cross. What are we doing as followers of Christ? Are willing to **Step Up**? Are we willing to **Stand Out**? Are we willing to put God First in our lives and to be a **Servant** to Him and others? What choice are you going to make?



Life Group Resource #6

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
Ephesians 4:2*

There's an old story about a fellow who's walking down a dark street one night and falls in a hole. There's no ladder, no shovel, and the walls are slick and steep. He can't get out. He calls out for help, and eventually a doctor comes by. "I'm stuck in this hole," the man cries. "Can you help me get out?" The doctor writes a prescription, tosses it down into the hole, and walks off. A little later a preacher comes by. "I'm stuck in this hole," the man again calls out. "It's cold down here. Please help me get out of here." The preacher writes a prayer on a scrap of paper and tosses it down to the man before walking off. Some time later a friend walks by the hole. "Hey Joey," calls the man, "I'm stuck in this hole and I can't get out." Without a word, Joey jumps down into the hole. The man is stunned. "Joey, are you crazy? This hole is deep, there's no ladder or anything, and now we're **both** stuck in here!" Joey says, "yeah, but I've been down here before and I know the way out."

Depression, fear, feeling left out, getting dumped by a boyfriend/girlfriend, family difficulties, the death of a loved one, all are shared experiences. None of them are any fun to go through, and it's even harder to endure if you feel all alone. This is true even of sinful behaviors, like drug or alcohol abuse or sexual promiscuity. A person can feel trapped, like there's no way out. When these kinds of things happen to Christians, the confusion, anger, shame and guilt can make the hole seem even deeper.

Have you been there? Do you know what it's like to overcome a sin or go through heartache? Have you dealt with depression or walked through grief? As hard as the experience was, it's like gold for someone who is going through that same thing right now. One of the most effective ways to encourage one another, after all, is to help each other out of the spiritual, mental, and emotional "holes" we all find ourselves in. Take some time this week to encourage someone on your school campus that is in a "hole." Listen to them, pray with them, offer advice sparingly, and **be there** for them.

Remember Galatians 6:2, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."



Life Group Resource #7

*But Godliness with contentment is great gain.
1 Timothy 6:6*

Did you know that, according to statistics from the U.S. Government, more than 32 million people in the United States live below the poverty level? You might be one of them, or know someone who is in that situation. Maybe you've never known anyone who was in need of food or shelter. Either way, the clear message of the Bible is this: Whatever situation we're in, we are to be content with ourselves, hungry to build our faith, and concerned for the plight of others. These are among the keys to a life completely changed by the power of Christ.

This is "Thankfulness" month in the "Passport" booklet. I know that it's easy in this day and age to become obsessed with ourselves and with how much stuff we can accumulate. Very often we are frustrated because we don't have as much "stuff," or our stuff isn't as nice, as the other guy's stuff. Once a year, we sit down at a table with family members and a well-roasted turkey and try to be thankful for all that stuff we've tried to accumulate. At least, that's the way it **can** feel. This month, let's see if we can alter that principle a little, shall we? Let's see if, instead of being thankful for all our **stuff**, we can be thankful for all we can do for others.

There was a widow who drew Jesus' attention as He was sitting in the Temple. She had two small coins, worth a penny, which she dropped in the collection at the Temple's treasury (Mark 12:41-44). She could have kept one for herself; after all, the collection there was purely voluntary. Yet "she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on." Not because someone told her to, and not because she expected anything in return. Yet, as Jesus observed, she "put more into the treasury than all the others." God's expectation, then, has nothing to do with the result. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 8:12, "Once the commitment is clear, you do what you can, not what you can't. The heart regulates the hands" (MSG).

As a student, you are surrounded by needy people. Maybe they have enough stuff. Maybe their stuff is better than yours is. That's only the surface, though, so look deeper. Who is having a rotten day? Who is lonely? Who is struggling in a subject that you are pretty good at? Who needs to hear about the faith you have in the risen Christ?

That's the challenge this Thanksgiving. Get below the "surface" of how much stuff you and I have as opposed to everyone else. Let's look, instead, at the gifts and talents God has given us, and how we can use those gifts, talents, and even the stuff we have to bless other people. Let's look for opportunities to be a blessing in the lives of others – giving our lunch to someone who doesn't have lunch money, or helping someone with their Social Studies homework, or spending a few minutes talking to a fellow student who is having problems at home. Then, when we start carving that turkey, we can be truly thankful because we have been faithful to the calling of Christ.



Life Group Resource #8

*But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
Luke 5:16*

For most of us, the Christmas break begins this week. For the next two or three weeks, you'll be blissfully free from tests and papers and study and homework! Best of all, smack-dab in the middle of the extended vacation, it's Christmas!

Studies have shown that it is important to take a break occasionally. Even at work, those of us who work at a computer for extended periods of time should prevent eyestrain by occasionally taking a break. Those breaks can be productive, though. I can go speak with someone in the office, make a phone call or two, or go get another cup of coffee (well, I think it's productive to have coffee, OK?). I can also take a break and pray for guidance on a project I'm working on or for some other need. It can be argued that if I am not productive in some way while I am at work I am robbing my employer.

As you may imagine (this is, after all, a devotional reading), the same principle applies to our Christian walk. The Gospels are full of references to Jesus taking a break (or trying to) from the crowds who followed Him. Luke notes that He often took a break from everyone, withdrawing "to lonely places." The thing is, He never took breaks to do whatever the first-century equivalent of vegging out on the couch was. His breaks were productive opportunities to commune with His Father. He was revived through these "prayer breaks," and Scripture contains ample evidence that he received guidance and reassurance during these solitary times in prayer. In fact, we read later on in the sixth chapter of Luke that Jesus took an all-night prayer break before calling His disciples!

Over the Christmas break, make it a point to spend a portion of your time praying and reading Scripture. Investigate things you've always wondered about in the Bible, and things you never thought of before. Pray about ways you can be Jesus to your family and friends, and to your school campus when you go back in January. Be creative, but be focused. The writer of Hebrews promises a great Sabbath rest to come, but until then, you and I are "on the job!"