LIFE Group Leader Handout
November 19, 2017
The Least of These
Rev. Paul Sandberg

Scripture--Matthew 25: 31-46
31 ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’
41 ‘Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ 45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Main Idea--God Calls Us to “The Least of These” to Meet Physical and Spiritual Needs
The identity of the “least of these” is not as important as the thought that God thinks it very important how we treat one another--especially those who cannot pay back

“...when did we do that?”

- They did not remember doing it
- They were not earning points
- They were not keeping score
- They gave from a generous heart
- They had an attitude of benevolence
- They are called the righteous (in Christ)

God’s servants--
Meet physical needs
Meet spiritual needs--the gospel

Don’t go to hell healthy, wealthy and smart.

Application--
- What parts of this message most ministered to you? What was the impact?
- How are you changing your actions as a result of these truths?
AVOID CANCELLING YOUR SMALL GROUP
By Eve Zdanio

60 minutes before your small group is about to begin, the texts start rolling in….

- “I’m having a crazy week. Not going to make it.”
- “My kids have a thing tonight. We won’t be there.”
- “I’ve got a headache. Gonna stay home.”

As a small group leader, it can be especially frustrating to receive these texts on days when you’ve had a crazy week, or your kids have things, or you have a headache. The easiest thing to do is just to cancel your small group meeting this week, but let me encourage you to reconsider.

Only one or two…There may be times when almost everyone in the group notifies you that they will not be coming that week. You start thinking about texting the rest of the group to let them know you are cancelling. Ahhh, a night off. You won’t have to get the house ready. You can just relax! It’s tempting. But here’s the problem…

When you cancel on the one or two who plan to come, you undermine their commitment. They are being faithful to the group, and to your leadership. Let them come over. Skip the study if you’d like. Have some snacks. Ask about their lives. There are times when these nights prove to be some of the most meaningful conversations and important investments you make in others.

Crazy week…What about your crazy schedule? When something comes up that conflicts with your small group meeting time, work hard at finding other options before you simply cancel. Try to work around it. If you are married, try to arrange for one of you to stay with the group and the other go. If you absolutely cannot be there, try to arrange for someone else in the group to host/lead that week. Yes, I understand the pressure. And, yes, I understand the importance of commitment to your family. But consider this…Your commitment to being at your own group week after week builds a foundation that others can rely on—even if their attendance isn’t as consistent.

A Rare Occasion. That said, there may be an occasion when you have no other option but to call off a night. No problem. But for the health of your small group, strive to make cancelling a rare occasion.