

COMMUNITY LIFE

Community Group Leader Guide

For the Week of October 6-12, 2024

Sermon Series: *Ever Wonder Why?* — Week 4

Watch the Leader Video and find all your resources online at
<https://clifec.com/community-group-resources/>

Need to watch the sermon? Check out our YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@CommunityLifeChurch>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Iron Church Men's Night of Worship

Men, mark your calendars! Join us for an unforgettable Iron Church Men's Night of Worship on October 7, 2024, featuring guest speaker Tierce Green. This will be a powerful night of worship, fellowship, and inspiration you won't want to miss. Cost \$15

Register now at clifec.com/men and invite your friends to experience this transformative evening together.

Blakes Run

On Saturday, November 16, 2024, we're hosting Blake's Run, our annual 5k/10k fun run! The race will be chip-timed for everyone who wants to compete but if you aren't competitive, no worries. Just run or walk for fun! Any way you participate is helping us achieve our mission of telling the world about Jesus. Register at clifec.com/blakesrun.

SHARE

Icebreaker:

If you had the ability to add any good habit to your life effortlessly, what would you choose and why?

Quick Review:

We are continuing *Ever Wonder Why?*, which is all about addressing the hard questions that we all tend to think of as we journey through life. This week, the big focus was on the question, "Why can't I stop?"

We looked at three potential reasons why God might feel far away: over-sensationalizing encounters with God, a hardened heart due to sin, and the possibility that God wants to draw us closer by encouraging us to seek Him more earnestly. Through biblical examples, such as Psalm 88, the life of Jesus, and the prophet Elijah, we can understand that feeling distant from God is not uncommon, but it doesn't mean God is absent.

Make It Personal:

1. What are some habits or sins in your life that you've tried to stop but continue to struggle with?
2. Why do you think behavior modification alone often fails to bring lasting change?
3. Have you ever replaced one vice with another instead of finding lasting change?
Share your experience.

STUDY

Go Deeper:

1. **Read Titus 2:11-12.** What is surprising about Grace in this passage?
2. How can we allow God to transform our hearts instead of relying solely on our efforts? What does that look like?

Action Steps:

1. **Identify root causes.** Reflect on the deeper emotional, relational, or spiritual issues behind your struggles.
2. **Practice accountability.** Connect with a trusted friend or mentor to keep you accountable in your efforts to change.
3. **Don't just remove, replace.** Actively seek to fill areas of your life where you've removed bad habits with healthy, God-honoring practices.
4. **Engage in Spiritual Disciplines.** Commit to regular prayer, Bible study, and worship to invite God's grace into your life.

PRAYER

1. Pray for the grace to rely on God's strength rather than your own to break sinful habits.
2. Ask God to reveal the spiritual, root causes of the struggles in your life.
3. Pray for victory over areas of temptation, particularly in habitual sins.
4. Ask God to replace unhealthy desires with a passion for righteousness.

BONUS CONTENT AND TIPS FOR LEADERS

Model vulnerability.

As a leader, it's essential to guide your group deeper into the heart of this message, focusing on grace-driven change. Be prepared to gently challenge people who might still be stuck in a mindset of legalism or self-effort.

Encourage your group to focus on **heart transformation** rather than outward behavior modification. You might want to use the metaphor of the tree and its fruit from Matthew 7:17-20 to illustrate this concept. Consider breaking down the **four elements** (practical, emotional, physical, and relational) and discussing how each of them has played a role in group members' struggles.

Consider leading a brief reflection time where you ask your group to close their eyes and think about a time when they experienced God's grace in a powerful way. Then, have them silently pray for God's grace to transform their hearts in areas of ongoing struggle.

Also, remind your group that change is often a **process** and not an event. Be patient with the process and trust that God is faithful to complete the work He has begun (Philippians 1:6).