Growth Group Lesson
November 12-13
1 Timothy 5:1-16

Recap: Paul continues to address the false teaching, and points out the importance of discerning true belief and conduct from the Bible rather than men. He also continues to lead Timothy to live an exemplary life for the elders and church of Ephesus by watching his "life and doctrine closely….because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

Spend some time praying with your group. Ask God for discernment to see what is true and not in your life and the lives of others around you. Ask God to reveal how you can apply the truth of His Word to your life this week.

Get to know one another:

1. Tell a story from your life where the family of God really came through for you.

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2
Paul is once again directing Timothy to live a godly life in his conduct, giving more specific information on what that looks like. Timothy is meant to be an example for the elders and church members in Ephesus, so they can imitate him as he imitates Christ.

2. How is Timothy called to treat other members of the church? **Verses 1-2**

Because Timothy is an example of a godly life, we are called to act in this same manner. As Timothy is bringing charges against elders, Paul directs him to be gentle and respectful, not harsh.

3. How are we called to bring correction to fellow believers? **Galatians 6:1-10, James 3:13-18, John 13:34-35, Proverbs 27:17, Matt. 18:15-17**

One of Paul's favorite metaphors for the church is a family. **1 Tim. 3:15, Eph. 2:11-22**

4. How does Paul call you to treat members of the church who are older than you? What does that look like in your life now?
5. How does Paul call you to treat members of the church who are peers or younger? What does that look like in your life now?
6. Do you have these kinds of multi-generational relationships in your life? Are these relationships important to you? Why or why not?
7. How would you like to pursue these kinds of loving relationships in your growth group? When will you begin that process?

Read 1 Timothy 5:3-8
After laying the groundwork for how the church ought to treat one another, he discusses three categories of how the true teaching of the Gospel transforms our honor for three distinct groups: widows, elders, and masters. The irony of these sections is that Paul is really calling for the church to behave as a family, both calling for the honoring of these groups *and* for these groups to honor the church family. Today we will look at honoring widows.

8. Why is Paul so insistent that widows be cared for? Why does being a widow put these women in a vulnerable situation? **James 1:27, Matthew 25:31-46, Deut. 27:19**
9. What is Paul's case for the widow's family caring for them? Why is it important? **Verse and 8, Deuteronomy 5:16, Matthew 15:3-9**
10. What has this or does this look like in your own family?
    a. Are there any challenges that you face in loving and caring for your family?
    b. How have you overcome some of these challenges? How are you praying for God to work if you have not overcome these challenges?

Read 1 Timothy 5:9-16

11. Why does Paul include character qualities and age requirements for the church to care for widows?
    a. Does this mean that no young widows can be cared for?

Evidently, some young widows in Ephesus had made vows to remain single and devote themselves to the church, but later changed their mind. Paul warns against unfaithfulness to these vows and the outcome of a lack of godly character in idleness and gossip. It is one more example of the danger of not watching your life and doctrine carefully. Rather, they should remain faithful to either their oath of singleness and dedication to God alone or a husband and family.

12. As the church is the family of God, how do we care for our church family members who are widows? **Verse 16**
    a. Are there any specific people that God is calling you to care for? How would you like to do that?
    b. Are there any specific people who are not widows that God is calling you to care for? How would you like to do that?
13. How can you spur one another on in your Growth Group to remain faithful, watching your life and doctrine carefully? **Hebrews 10:24-25**
14. Who do you know that needs to hear the good news of Jesus and has physical needs? How can your group help you love them?

Spend some time praying to close your evening.

- Ask God for clarity in how to care for people in your group and church family.
- Ask God for people who you can disciple or be discipled by. If you already have a discipling relationship, ask for God to continue working in it.
- Ask God for opportunities to care for people in your neighborhoods so that they can come to know Jesus.