

How will you begin making a difference? In the space below write out your own prayer to the Lord. What in the sermon touched you? Include some of the thoughts you have had as you've studied this lesson. What do you want to tell the Lord? What do you need from the Lord? What do you want to give to the Lord? Share your heart and your conviction with God now.

Close by reading together—

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?”

Making a Difference

Text: Matthew 10:37-39

The Plain Truth

You begin to _____ what you _____ to.

4 Ideas as to Why

1. _____
2. Pleasures and _____
3. _____
4. _____

One Year Bible Reading

Oct. 12: Jeremiah 19:1-21:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-28, Psalm 82:1-8, Prov. 25:9-10
Oct. 13: Jeremiah 22:1-23:20, 2 Thess. 1:1-12, Psalm 83:1-18, Prov. 25:11-14
Oct. 14: Jeremiah 23:21-25:38, 2 Thess. 2:1-17, Psalm 84:1-12, Prov. 25:15
Oct. 15: Jeremiah 26:1-27:22, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18, Psalm 85:1-13, Prov. 25:16
Oct. 16: Jeremiah 28:1-29:32, 1 Timothy 1:1-20, Psalm 86:1-17, Proverbs 25:17
Oct. 17: Jeremiah 30:1-31:26, 1 Timothy 2:1-15, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 25:18-19
Oct. 18: Jeremiah 31:27-32:44, 1 Timothy 3:1-16, Psalm 88:1-18, Prov. 25:20-22

October 11 & 12, 2014

Making a Difference

Life Group Lesson • Week of October 12

We are born with an ability to grasp onto something. Even as infants our little fist is able to hold onto our mother's thumb when she cuddles or nurses us. Our urge to cling to, or hold onto something, is innate and gives us an assurance of being secure. As children we hold onto the hand of an adult we trust as we cross the street. Later we may hold the hand of a boyfriend or girlfriend as we make our way through tough teenage years. Grasping and clinging are not bad things as long as the object of our anchor reciprocates love, trust and care. But along the way, we may foolishly begin to cling to things that will not last, things that cannot love us, protect us, or save us.

So who do you ultimately cling to? "This is what the LORD says: 'Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the LORD. They are like stunted shrubs in the desert, with no hope for the future. They will live in the barren wilderness, in an uninhabited salty land. But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit'" (Jeremiah 17:5-8). In the end our Lord is the only anchor worth clinging to.

Read Matthew 10:37-39

1. "If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me (Jesus), you will find it" (v39). Have you ever found yourself clinging to something or someone other than Jesus? How did it take life from you?

What brought you to finally unclench your grasp and let it go?

Why is it hard to loosen our grip on things we have grasped for a long time?

We cannot open our hand to the new thing God wants to give us as long as our fists are tightly clinched to old things. God wants to give us a new purpose, but we're holding tightly to old habits. God wants to open our eyes to new friends, but we're clinging to an old relationship (or the memory of one). God wants to generously bless us, but we refuse to be faithful with the tithe and fearfully hoard our income. God didn't save us so we could go back to our old ways (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Jesus said: "If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine" (v37). If you and I are holding onto *anything* more tightly than we are to Jesus, at some point, we will have to let it go if we truly want to take the hand of Christ. Christ calls us out of our fears and into courageous discipleship. Your heavenly Father loves you. You can trust Him with *everything*. God will give you wisdom for day-to-day living if you ask (James 1:5), and He will put good things in your hand if you unclench your fist and trust Him.

2. Read the following passages and describe how each person had to loosen their grip on things and instead trust God in order to make a difference.

Genesis 12:1-7

Exodus 3:1-10

Joshua 1:1-9

1 Chronicles 17:7-27

Abraham was willing leave his native country and go where God would take him. Because Abraham loved God even more than the precious son of his old age, God not only spared his son but gave him descendants too numerous to count (see Genesis 22:1-18). Moses was willing to let go of his past and confront a world power head-on in order to free God's people from bondage. Joshua let go of fear and became a courageous warrior leading God's people into the Promised Land. David left the sheepfold and became a great king and leader, a shepherd willing to lay down his life for God's people. The Bible is filled with stories of men and women who were willing to unclench their grip on personal gain and the things of this world in order to receive the powerful promises of God—and make a difference!

3. Is the Lord calling you to loosen your grip (break the connection) with something or somebody that is not in your best interest? Either on a scrap piece of paper or in the space below, write what it is (or who it is) you're clinging to other than Christ. Give that thing or that person to God now.

As you unclench your grasp and give this thing or this person to God, open your hands to the Lord and ask Him to replace the old with the new—the new purpose He has for you, the new ministry, the new people He wants to put in your life, the new job or financial opportunity He has for you. What new thing does God want to put in your hand?