



FALL WEEK 3 | September 27-28, 2025



LEADER NOTES

- ◇ **Need help?** Reach out to your Life Group Pastor any time!
- ◇ **You don't have to answer every question.** Pick the ones that fit your group best.
- ◇ **Encourage everyone to share.** Set time limits if needed.
- ◇ **Use the audio guide for more insights:** [Leader Tools](#)
- ◇ **Finalizing social and service projects?** Check out:
 - [Service project ideas](#)
 - [Social ideas](#)



ATTENDANCE & ONLINE GROUPS

- ◇ **Submit attendance:** [Post attendance](#)
- ◇ **Online Groups:** Get [tips and tutorials!](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◇ **North Coast Men's Conference - October 24-25**
Join us Friday evening, October 24 & Saturday morning, October 25, for the fourth North Coast Men's Conference held at the Vista Campus! Come ready to recharge and refocus on God's call for us with teaching led by pastors Chris Brown and James Griffin, along with worship, activities, and tourneys! Register at northcoastchurch.com/mens-conference/.
- ◇ **Women's Gathering-October 14**
You won't want to miss this incredible evening at the Vista Campus Tuesday, October 14! Receive biblical encouragement, practical leadership tools, and a time of refreshment. Featuring speaker Megan Fate Marshman. Register at northcoastchurch.com/womens-gathering/.



SCAN ME



LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

WARM UP



1. In this weekend's message, we saw Jesus use the image of new wine in old wineskins to show that His new life doesn't fit into old ways. Do you usually like to try new things, or do you prefer to stick with what you're familiar with? Give examples.

- **Additional Question:** Can you think of a time when trying something new helped your faith grow?
- **Conversation Caution:** Some may feel ashamed about being resistant to change; normalize that, we all can struggle.

2. Fasting can be spiritual or dietary. If you had to give up one favorite food for a month, which would be hardest to let go of?

- **Additional Thought:** A fun entry point into the idea of fasting. Most people will share something humorous. This question builds connection while previewing the concept of voluntary sacrifice.
- **Additional Scripture:** Matthew 6:17-18 – “But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face...”
- **Additional Question:** Have you ever fasted before, spiritually or otherwise? What did you learn?
- **Conversation Caution:** Clarify that this is not a judgment or diet conversation

3. What stood out to you from this weekend's message?

- **Additional Thought:** This helps transition from fun to focus. What lingers from the message often reveals what God is pressing on our hearts.
- **Additional Question:** Did anything challenge your assumptions or give you a new perspective?
- **Conversation Caution:** If people didn't hear the message, invite them to reflect on this week's theme or the passage instead.
- **Group Dynamic Tip:** Jot down key words or themes from the group's responses to revisit later.

KNOW IT



1. A spiritual discipline is a practice or habit that helps a person grow in their faith, such as prayer, fasting, or bible study. This weekend, we were reminded that these practices are “tools, not rules,” meant to be engaged with meaningfully, not ritualistically.

With this in mind, read Romans 14:1-12 and Colossians 2:16-17, 20-22. As you read, look for 2-3 ways you see God valuing relationship over ritual.

- **Additional Thought:** Paul urges us not to judge each other over disputable matters, pointing to God's desire for genuine faith, not performance-based religiosity.
- **Additional Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:7 – “The Lord sees not as man sees... the Lord looks on the heart.”
- **Additional Question:** What spiritual habits have helped you grow closer to God, and which have felt more like “checklist religion”?
- **Conversation Caution:** Watch out for critique of other churches or denominations. Focus on *heart posture*, not preference.
- **Group Dynamic Tip:** Consider reading the verses aloud with two readers, one for each passage. Then ask: “What words or phrases stood out to you?”

2. How might these verses shape your view of your own spiritual practices? How should we treat those who do things differently, and why does it matter?

- **Additional Thought:** Paul reminds us that each believer answers to God, not to each other. Unity doesn't require uniformity.

- **Additional Scripture:** Romans 14:10 – “Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother?”
- **Additional Question:** How can we create a culture of grace in our group when it comes to spiritual practices?
- **Conversation Caution:** Avoid turning this into a debate. The goal is humility, not convincing others.
- **Group Dynamic Tip:** Encourage group members to share one practice that helps them connect with God even if it looks different than others’.

SHARE IT



1. Larry encouraged us to try different spiritual practices and keep what works. Are there any disciplines you’ve tried and kept? Any you’ve set aside? Any you haven’t tried yet, but want to?

- **Additional Thought:** Trying, failing, adjusting, and discovering are part of spiritual growth. Normalize the trial-and-error process.
- **Additional Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:7 – “...train yourself for godliness.”
- **Additional Question:** Is there a practice you’ve never tried but want to explore?
- **Conversation Caution:** Some may feel guilty for inconsistent practices. Affirm that God honors progress, not perfection.

2. As we see in Matthew 9:16-17, embracing change requires flexibility. Has there been a time when a change upset you at first but ended up working out better than expected?

- **Additional Question:** What did you learn about God or yourself through that change?
- **Group Dynamic Tip:** Use smaller groups or pairs to allow more honest sharing for this one, especially if you have a larger group.

LIVE IT



1. Looking again at Matthew 9:16-17, if the ‘new wine’ is God’s new work in your life, what are some ‘old wineskins’—old habits, mindsets, or rules—that could hold it back? How might God be calling you to grow out of those old habits?

- **Additional Thought:** These might be thought patterns (legalism, self-doubt), habits (isolation, control), or expectations (how God *should* work).
- **Additional Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 5:17 – “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...”
- **Additional Question:** What’s one step you can take this week to create space for God’s new work?
- **Conversation Caution:** Avoid making this a “fix yourself” conversation-- this is about surrender, not self-effort.
- **Group Dynamic Tip:** Ask each person to finish this sentence: “One old mindset I want to release is...”

2. God has wired us all differently (Psalm 139:13-16). Ask God to show you if there’s someone—maybe even yourself—you’ve been too hard on for not fitting into a mold Jesus never meant for us. Send them a note of support, or if it’s you, thank God for making you unique in His image. Share your experience with your life group this week.

- **Additional Thought:** This is a spiritual practice of compassion and encouragement. Whether it’s a note, text, or prayer, these small acts of obedience can heal relationships.
- **Additional Question:** How might God be inviting you to see that person (or yourself) the way He sees them?
- **Group Dynamic Tip:** Invite group members to write the name of a person to encourage this week and pray over those names in closing.



Tools or Rules?

The Passage:

Jesus's Take on Fasting and How God Works

Matthew 9:14-17/ Isaiah 58:1-14

Fasting: The What, When & Why

Biblical Fasting is a **RESPONSE**, not a **RITUAL**.

How God Works:

God seldom uses the same gameplan **TWICE**.

The Truth About Spiritual Disciplines, Traditions, And Rituals

1. No two **PERSONAL** relationships are ever **EXACTLY** the **SAME**.

Romans 14:1-12

2. Never turn a **TOOL** that works for **YOU** into a **RULE** for **EVERYBODY**.

Colossians 2:16-17, 20-22/ Mark 2:27

3. Try them **ALL**. Keep what **WORKS FOR YOU**.

4. Always judge the **FRUIT**, not the **WATERING SCHEDULE**.

Micah 6:7-8