



SPRING WEEK 7 | May 9-10

**LEADER NOTES**

Important Note regarding this week's meeting: We'll be emailing the new **Life Group Member Check-In** soon (formerly called the feedback form), and we'd love your help encouraging participation. Please set aside **5–10 minutes** during group for members to complete it together. This greatly helps participation and allows you to assist anyone who may have trouble accessing it. Our hope is to hear from group members so we can better support both your group and your leadership.

Essentials Training Excerpt: *Creating Space for Honest Spiritual Conversation*

As leaders, one of our goals is to create a group environment where people can move from **safe answers** to **honest reflection** at a pace that feels safe and healthy.

Resist the urge to:

- rush vulnerability
- fix problems
- force outcomes

Instead, create space for people to process honestly, listen well, and take one next step toward Jesus.

Leader Reminder: Success this week is hearing from everyone and keeping God's Word at the center.

**UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- ◇ **2026 Men's Conference** – Join us for the North Coast Men's Conference at the Vista Campus on Friday, June 19 and Saturday, June 20, 2026, for a weekend designed to help men recharge and refocus on God's call, featuring three sessions team-taught by Pastor Chris Brown and guest speaker Pastor Larry Acosta, along with worship, food, events. Bring your friends, neighbors, son, or Life Group, and choose to stay overnight with onsite camping for campers or tents. Go to Northcoastchurch.com or the North Coast app to register.
- ◇ **Ready to Make an Impact?** – Each Life Group quarter we invite all of our Life Groups to make an impact through serving together with one of our Local Impact partners. Has your Life Group picked an Impact Project yet? From packing toiletry kits and sack lunches to hosting bingo nights at the senior center, building beautification, meal delivery and so much more, the North Coast Impact website has hundreds of service opportunities in your area! Learn more in the North Coast Church app or at northcoastchurch.com

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

May 10, 2026

WARM UP



1. In the passage this weekend, Jesus said we should come to God like a child. What were you like as a child? Is there a quality you had then that you wish you had more of as an adult?

2. The disciples wanted to know who was going to be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. What do most people in today's world think makes someone "great"?

3. Was there anything about this message you found new, confusing, or encouraging?

KNOW IT



Reread this week's passage (Matthew 18:1-14) together and answer the following questions.

1. The disciples were arguing over "who's the greatest." Where in your life are you tempted to compare yourself to others or measure your importance? Based on Jesus' reply in the passage, what do you think He would say to you about that situation or area?

- **Additional Question:** Where do people most commonly measure worth or importance today?
- **Additional Scripture:** Galatians 1:10 - *Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?*
- **Conversational Caution:** Be compassionate to those within your group who you know are wrestling with deep insecurity or past trauma. But don't allow the discussion to become emotionally consuming.

2. Jesus used the example of a child to represent the kind of humility we are to have. In what ways are children humble or lowly? How do you think those qualities paint a picture of the humility Jesus is talking about?

- **Additional Thought:** Children have very little status, power, or influence. Jesus intentionally uses someone "low" in society to redefine greatness.
- **Additional Question:** What qualities of childlike humility become difficult as we grow older?
- **Additional Scripture:** 1 Peter 5:5-6 - *In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

3. In verses 6-14, Jesus uses strong language about causing others to stumble and then tells a story about pursuing one sheep, showing that He cares deeply about vulnerable and wandering people. What do you notice about greatness and/or humility here?

- **Additional Thought:** Greatness in the Kingdom of God is marked by compassion, and the pursuit of “wandering people”
- **Conversational Caution:** Be careful that the group doesn’t oversimplify “wandering people.” Help your group to see the compassion, pursuit, and restoration Jesus paints through the story of the sheep.
- **Additional Question:** What does the shepherd’s pursuit of one sheep reveal about God’s heart?

SHARE IT



1. We were reminded this weekend that sin can create distance in our relationship with God. How have you seen or experienced that in your life? Explain. What do you think that kind of distance looks like?

- **Conversational Caution:** Protect the room this week. Some may share very personal struggles. Here’s a few ways to maintain safety:
 - Don’t allow the discussion to force someone for details.
 - Steer the discussion from becoming hyper-fixated on fixing or determining solutions.
- **Additional Thought:** Sin is not merely rule-breaking, it’s also a disrupter of intimacy and connection with God.
- **Additional Questions:** When you feel distant from God, what usually changes first? What helps restore closeness with God after drift or distance?
- **Additional Scripture:** Psalm 51:10-12 - *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

2. On the other hand, in this passage, we see a God who actively seeks the sheep that wanders away. When have you seen God pursue or bring someone back, either in your own life or someone else’s?

- **Conversational Caution:** Be sensitive to unresolved pain connected to wandering loved ones members of the group may have. There could be a prodigal child, drifting spouse, or even a distant friend.
- **Additional Question:** What does loving pursuit look like without control or judgment?
- **Additional Scripture:** Romans 2:1-4 - *You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So, when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?*

LIVE IT



1. Read John 3:30. This is a beautiful picture of how humility makes us more Christlike. Where in your life do you feel the tension between promoting yourself and surrendering to God? What might it look like to “decrease” in a practical way this week?
 - **Additional Thought:** This question should lead your group to discuss and focus on surrendering the need to center life around ourselves.
 - **Additional Scripture:** *Philippians 2:1-4 - Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

2. Jesus says that the shepherd will leave the 99 to rescue the one. As the 99, we’re invited to care about the ones who have wandered. Who is someone you’re praying for to reconnect with God? What would it look like to consistently pray for or gently reach out to them this week?
 - **Conversational Caution:** Help your group steer clear from judgmental language. People may unintentionally speak about wandering people with frustration, superiority, and criticism. If this occurs, redirect the discussion back to compassion and grace promptly.
 - **Additional Question:** What kind of approach tends to draw people toward God rather than push them away?



The Heart Of The Church

MAIN POINT #1: Greatness Starts With Humility

Matthew 18:1-4, Philippians 2:3-8, James 4:6, Matthew 23:12, John 3:30

Jesus pointed to a **CHILD**, not a **POSITION**.

Humility is not thinking **LESS** of myself; it's thinking of myself **LESS**.

MAIN POINT #2: The Church Protects People From Sin

Matthew 18:5-7, Romans 14:13-23, Hebrews 10:24

How I treat God's **PEOPLE** is how I treat **JESUS**.

Sin doesn't just affect **ME**; it pulls people away from **GOD**.

MAIN POINT #3: Sin Must Be Cut Off

Matthew 18:8-9, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Timothy 2:22, Romans 13:14, Colossians 3:5

What I **TOLERATE** spiritually today will grow stronger tomorrow.

Jesus calls me to **RUN** from whatever leads me away from **GOD**.

MAIN POINT #4: The Father Pursues The One

Matthew 18:10-14, Hebrews 1:14, Luke 15:4-7, 2 Peter 3:9, Ezekiel 34:11-12, 16

God relentlessly **PURSUES** those who wander.

The heart of the Father is **RESTORATION**, not separation.