



Discussion Guide Off Limits – Part 3 LEADER GUIDE

.....

Hey leaders! As we continue our “Off Limits”, our prayer is that your group will challenge and encourage one another to allow God’s transformative grace to touch the parts of your lives that have remained untouched for too long. We also recently added NEW features that we hope you find helpful and encouraging! We’ve incorporated sermon quotes into the questions; a practice for your group to try throughout the month; and a “recap” card that can be shared a day or two after you gather.

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

.....

“To live in love is to sail forever, spreading seeds of joy and peace in hearts.”
[Therese of Lisieux]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **1 John Ch. 4 Commentary & God Is Love**
 - Use the commentary and short video for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share with your group before you gather.
- **Use Your Faith to Respond (vs. React)**
 - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ICEBREAKER || Leader Note The goal for the icebreaker is to build joy and gratitude together. If you’d prefer, you can ask this question: What are you grateful for or how have you experienced joy this week?

What has been a funny or strange reaction to something you’ve said or done recently? (or that you’ve had to someone else)

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God’s righteousness.”
[James 1:19-20]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today’s discussion is.

Reactions are a source of revelation. Are our reactions informed and shaped by the love of Jesus?

PASSAGES || Leader Note Follow the instructions in the “Discussion” section to read each passage at the appropriate time.

- Proverbs 17:27-28
- 1 John 4:7-12

DISCUSSION || Leader Note Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Proverbs 17:27-28.

1. Who has been a good example of this passage in your life? How?
2. What is difficult for you about “keeping a cool head” when you become angry with someone?
3. How has “remaining silent” helped you to respond with the love of Jesus to others? If you have not practiced this much, how do you imagine it could help?
4. In the sermon we heard, *“Bad reactions are not new, but they have now been normalized.”* How have you normalized bad reactions in your own life? *This is a great opportunity to go first!*

Have someone read aloud 1 John 4:7-12.

5. Why is it important for Christians to love one another? *Loving one another is crucial because it reflects the nature of God, who is love. By loving one another, we bear witness to the transforming power of God's love in our lives and demonstrate our identity as disciples of Christ. Additionally, our love for one another strengthens the unity of the body of Christ and fosters a supportive community that reflects God's character to the world.*
6. What role does knowing God play in our ability to love one another? *Knowing God is foundational to our ability to love one another authentically. As we deepen our relationship with God through prayer, study of His Word, and fellowship with other believers, we come to understand His character and the depth of His love for us. This transforms our hearts, enabling us to love others with the same selfless, sacrificial love that God has shown us.*
7. In what ways does love serve as evidence of our relationship with God? *Love serves as evidence of our relationship with God because it reflects His character and nature. When we love one another, we demonstrate that we have been transformed by God's love and have become partakers of His divine nature. Our love for others becomes a testimony to the reality of our faith and the power of God's grace working in our lives.*
8. What are some practical ways we can overcome barriers to loving one another? *One practical way to overcome barriers to loving one another is through humility and self-awareness. We must acknowledge our own shortcomings and biases and be willing to extend grace and forgiveness to others. Additionally, cultivating empathy and seeking to understand others' perspectives can help break down barriers and foster genuine love and unity within the body of Christ.*
9. How does God's love for us inspire and empower us to love others unconditionally? *God's love for us serves as the ultimate example and motivation for loving others unconditionally. When we fully grasp the depth of God's love demonstrated through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, we are compelled to love others in the same way. As we abide in God's love and allow His Spirit to work in and through us,*

we are empowered to love others with a selfless, sacrificial love that reflects the character of Christ.

10. In the sermon we heard, *“Reactions are demonstrations that we are God’s dearly loved children!”* How is God inviting you to react differently as a dearly loved child? How can we help or encourage you to do that? *This is a great opportunity to go first!*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The power of God’s transforming grace can allow our reactions to be informed and shaped by the love of Jesus, IF we are willing to humble ourselves and surrender our hearts to Him. Based on the Holy Spirit’s prompting today, **what is a step of obedience that you can take?**

Here are some questions to ask ourselves as we consider how to react in the love of Jesus ...

- What actually happened?
- What am I feeling?
- What story am I telling myself?
- What does the Gospel say?
- What counter-instinctual action demonstrates the better way of Jesus?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your small group each week to pray for the focused area below.*

Off Limits

- Pray that God would reveal the areas in your life that need to be surrendered to His transforming power.
- Pray that God would give you and others the courage to surrender the areas that are the biggest strongholds in your mind and heart, so that no area of your life is off limits to Him.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE *Optional* *We include a monthly spiritual practice that can be shared with your group after you gather. Our hope is for this to enhance what we’re learning and discussing together, so share about your experience with the practice at the beginning of your gatherings or throughout the week!*

Centering prayer is a practice that leads one into the inner room of the soul and can usher you deeper into prayer, opening yourself up to the transforming power of God’s grace more readily!

- [Centering Prayer](https://rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2) or rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2