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Hey small group leaders! We're in week three of our sermon series, "[Life Tools](#)"! In this series we'll explore practical tools that make following Jesus simpler in everyday life. These aren't rules or formulas—they're real-life habits and insights that made a difference in someone's walk with Christ. Growing in faith doesn't have to be complicated—it just takes the right life tools!

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

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*"Grace alone brings about every good work in us,
and faith is the beginning of that work."
[Augustine]*

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!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - Paul describes his opposition to Peter's hypocrisy and legalistic example in ceasing to dine with Gentile Christians. The root of Peter's behavior was fear of people. Peter's actions betrayed the truth of the Gospel and in particular, justification by faith. Paul's solution is to reteach and reemphasize justification by faith alone in Christ alone.
- **Galatians Ch. 2 Commentary & Crucified With Christ**
 - Use the commentary and short article/audio for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Smash the Approval Idol**
 - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || **Leader Note** *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.*

If walking by faith earned you a creative badge, what would it say?" (i.e. "Professional Stumbler", "Hopeful Wanderer", "Trust Fall Champion")

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

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

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing;
it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. "
[Ephesians 2:8-9]*

BIG IDEA || Leader Note Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.

In being justified by Christ, we are freed from the fear of people in the present and God's judgement in the future.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

1. In the sermon we heard, *"We walk through life amassing a sense of who we are through all the feedback pinging back at us."* What recent feedback have you allowed to distract you from who God called you to be? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*

Now, have someone read aloud Galatians 2:11-21. Consider having someone else read it again, possibly in a different translation.

2. What was the conflict between Paul and Peter? Why did Paul publicly confront Peter? *Paul confronted Peter because Peter stopped eating with Gentile Christians out of fear of criticism from Jewish believers. This behavior compromised the truth of the Gospel—namely, that justification is by faith, not by adherence to Jewish customs.*
3. What does Paul say about how a person is justified before God? *Paul states emphatically that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the core of the Gospel and the ultimate source of approval and righteousness.*
4. What is the significance of Paul saying, *"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."*? *Paul expresses that his old self, which sought approval and identity through works, is dead. His new identity is found in union with Christ, who now lives through him. His life is motivated and sustained by faith in Christ, not by self-effort.*
5. The sermon talked about the "idol of approval." What makes approval such a powerful (wrong) motivator, even among Christians? *Even in Christian settings, the desire for affirmation and value can lead to performance-based living, people-pleasing, and comparing ourselves with others, all of which shift our focus from Christ to ourselves.*
6. What are some signs that you may be slipping into "gospel amnesia"? How could knowing that you are fully approved in Christ change how you view yourself today? *Signs may include shame, defensiveness, moral posturing, withdrawal from others, or judgmentalism. They often surface when approval from others feels threatened.*
7. What practical step can you take this week to remember and rest in your justification through Christ? *Answers will vary: this might include daily Scripture reading on identity, journaling gospel truths, memorizing Galatians 2:20, or sharing your story with someone else.*
8. What would it look like for us, as a group, to confront hypocrisy or Gospel drift in love as Paul did with Peter? *Answers will vary: by affirming each other in Christ, confessing struggles honestly, and reminding each other of justification truths regularly. It involves courage, gentleness, and a clear focus on the truth of the Gospel, and a commitment to Gospel unity over comfort or image.*

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.*

Today, we witnessed a powerful moment when Paul publicly confronted Peter—not to shame him, but to **protect the truth of the Gospel**. The danger was not just Peter’s withdrawal, but the false message it sent: that we gain approval through performance, not grace. Paul’s answer is justification by faith—a once-for-all declaration that we are fully accepted in Christ. This Gospel truth frees us from the exhausting quest for human approval and gives us a firm foundation of joy and peace.

As you consider your next step, here are questions to reflect on: 1) Where am I seeking approval apart from Christ—and what fruit is it producing? 2) Do I believe that I am as accepted and loved today as I will be in heaven? Why or why not?

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. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Possible Next Steps of Faith

1. Spend 5 minutes daily meditating on Galatians 2:20. Let it reframe your identity.
2. Identify one “approval source” you’re tempted to trust in. Confess it and ask God to help you replace it with His Gospel assurance.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *Be intentional about saving at least 5-7 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. **THIS SUMMER, we will share creative and unique ways for your group to pray together.** Give these a try or simply pray for one another’s personal requests!*

Loved to Love

Today, let’s remind one another of Christ’s love and be refreshed to love others through it.

- Invite everyone to silently reflect on this question: “**What’s one way you’ve personally experienced God’s love recently?**” Encourage them to keep it simple—just a word, image, or short moment.
- Then, have each person briefly (15 seconds or less) share *a word or short phrase* that captures how they’ve felt or seen God’s love. (i.e. “peace”, “grace through a friend”, “patience”).
- Next, each person simply prays 1-2 sentences, starting with something like:
 - “Thank you, God, for showing us your love through ...”
 - “Help us love others today by ...”
- There is no pressure to pray aloud—just pass to the next person if someone prefers to listen.

Close with a short prayer like: “Father, thank You for loving us in Jesus. Refresh our hearts so we might overflow with Your love to others today. Amen.”