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Hey leaders! We're in week five of "Life Tools", exploring practical tools that make following Jesus simpler in everyday life. We hope that as your group gathers in a different rhythm this summer, you will continue to be intentional about equipping, empowering, and encouraging one another to grow in your faith!

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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*"If you treat sin like a snack, you'll never go to God like He's bread.
You'll nibble on the world and wonder why you're still hungry."*

[Jackie Hill Perry]

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 teaches that believers in Christ are no longer slaves to sin. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too are raised from death to live for God. Paul urges believers not to let sin reign in their bodies or offer themselves to sin, but to offer themselves to God as instruments of righteousness. Sin no longer has dominion over us because we are under grace, not law.
- **Romans Ch. 6 Commentary & Walk In the Newness of Life**
 - Use the commentary and short article (option to listen) for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **The Dragon Hiding In Your Desires**
 - 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.*

Let's begin with confession. What's one thing you believed as a kid that you now laugh about?

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!

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

[1 John 1:8-9]

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

If you want to experience a more joyful life that leads people to see Jesus more clearly, then you have to take your sin seriously.

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!

There are two passages for the discussion today. First, have someone read aloud Matthew 5:29-30.

1. Why do you think Jesus uses language such as gouging out your eye and cutting off your hand to describe the sin in our life? How does that make you feel? *Jesus is using hyperbolic language to stress the seriousness of sin and the radical action required to avoid it. He's calling for intentional removal of anything that causes us to stumble, because the consequences of unchecked sin are grave.*

Next, have someone read aloud Romans 6:1-14.

2. What misunderstanding about grace does Paul address? (v. 1-2) *Paul confronts the false notion that grace gives believers permission to sin. He emphatically says, "Absolutely not!" and explains that those who are united with Christ in His death are also dead to sin and should not continue living in it.*
3. What does Paul mean when he talks about not letting sin reign and not offering our bodies to sin? (v. 12-13) *Paul is calling believers to live out their new identity by actively resisting sin's rule and offering themselves to God as instruments of righteousness. It's a call to both defensive and offensive spiritual living.*
4. Why is it essential for us to understand our identity in Christ when fighting sin? *Answers will vary: knowing that we are united with Christ means we are not powerless. This gives us the vision and power to live free from sin. Without this foundation, we fight sin in our own strength and become discouraged.*
5. In the sermon we heard, "You are not bound or stuck in any sin that the power of Christ in you cannot overcome." What hope does this offer us? *Answers will vary: it reminds us that no sin is stronger than the resurrection power of Christ. Even deep-rooted habits or patterns can be overcome when we rely on our new nature in Christ and the work of the Spirit.*
6. How could understanding sin as "fighting against the purpose of God" reshape how we view personal struggles like gossip, lust, or envy? *Answers will vary: it reframes sin not as a personal issue alone, but as a spiritual opposition to God's mission in our lives. Every sin becomes a betrayal of our calling to be instruments for His righteousness.*
7. In what area of your life are you currently offering your "members"—your words, thoughts, or actions—to unrighteousness? *This is a good opportunity to go first! Help your group members identify practical areas of spiritual compromise and invite them to move toward surrender and accountability.*
8. What practical defenses (i.e. Scripture, confession, prayer, community) are you using—or neglecting—in your fight against sin? *Answers will vary: evaluate if members are daily renewing their minds, confessing sin, and staying engaged with spiritual family. Encourage realistic adjustments and next steps where needed!*

9. How can we help those who feel stuck(our group, friends, family, etc.) in sin to not hide in shame but run to grace? *Answers will vary: by modeling vulnerability, creating safe places of confession, emphasizing the power of grace, and reminding one another that God is better at grace than we are at sin. Grace must be both preached and practiced.*

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 Christian life is not about behavior management but about **radical heart transformation** empowered by our **union with Christ**. Jesus calls us to take sin seriously—because He loves us deeply. *That means we must refuse* to let sin reign, defend our hearts with truth, and offer our lives to God as weapons for righteousness. The fight is real, but grace is greater!

As you consider your next step, here are two questions to reflect on: 1) What sin have I been tolerating instead of crucifying? 2) Where do I need to believe again that Christ's power is greater than my sin?

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. **Confess a specific sin** to a trusted friend this week. Ask for prayer and encouragement.
2. **Take one offensive step** by writing down a way you will offer yourself as a “weapon for righteousness” this week—in your home, work, or church.

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!

Joy Through Surrender

Today, let's prayerfully experience deeper joy by honestly confessing sin and freshly receiving Christ's grace.

- Invite the group to silently reflect on this question: *“Lord, is there any sin, attitude, or habit that's quietly stealing my joy in You?”*
 - Encourage honesty and stillness. This is private—no one shares this part.
- Then, invite each person to silently confess that sin to Jesus.
- Say aloud: “Now silently tell Jesus: ‘I surrender this to you, and I trust you to forgive and change me.’”
- Invite each person to speak out one **truth from the Gospel** in response to their confession. Here are some examples:
 - “In Christ, I am forgiven.”
 - “Jesus paid for this at the cross.”
 - “The joy of the Lord is my strength.”
- Last, say aloud: “As you speak your truth, you are choosing joy in Jesus over guilt in yourself.”

Close with a short prayer like: *“Father, restore the joy of your salvation to us, and help us live it out with clear hearts and open hands. Amen.”*