

Week 3: Follow Your Heart

Primary Passage: John 8:30-36

Related Passages: Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 15:18-19

"To serve God, to love God, to enjoy God, is the sweetest freedom in the world." - **Thomas Watson**

LifeGroup Study Guide:

Leader Notes: Hey leaders! As you might have noticed, a number of topics we are talking about in the "You Are Here" series involve a fair amount of nuance. Many of our cultural ideologies are responses to real problems and/or involve some good and healthy aspects. However, they also include some dangerous and broken aspects that need to be redeemed. We hope this guide is a helpful resource for you in navigating any hiccups that may come up during your group's discussion this week on: "Follow Your Heart".

Read and Recap: Have someone read John 8:30-41 and recap the highlights from this week's sermon.

- In what ways do you see the message "follow your heart" ingrained throughout our culture and society? How do you see the people in your life trying to exercise their freedom, especially by throwing off restrictions?

Leader Notes: Our culture certainly seems pretty dialed in on how life crumbles in the presence of the wrong, overbearing and unhelpful rules and restrictions. What our culture seems to lack perspective on is how life also crumbles in the absence of the right restrictions. Don't be surprised if people bring up morally negative and/or morally neutral examples of people throwing off restrictions. Someone may even say something like, "Well I had a friend who had really overbearing parents and had to reject some of their restrictions. Are we saying something's wrong with that?" Nope, we're not.

- What areas of your life make you feel the most restricted or trapped?

Leader Notes: These could be the ways that the "Disney doctrine" is impacting our decision making, or it could just be a throwing off of expectation or order when it comes to how we make decisions in our lives. Help your people discern the difference between throwing off bad, unhelpful, overbearing restrictions versus restrictions that naturally come with building beautiful life-giving weight, responsibility and commitments in life.

- How do you usually react when someone tells you that you have to do something or can't do something? Why do you think that is? Are you more inclined to rebel against restrictions or more inclined to find comfort and security in them?

Leader Notes: We've tried to ask this question in a nuanced way but we don't want you to be unprepared for potential pushback here.

This is likely a spot where someone might bring up an example when restrictions could be abusive, overbearing or generally misguided. We don't want to encourage someone in an abusive relationship to stay submitted to this abuse, but we don't want to encourage people to throw off all restrictions in their lives either. Ask some leading questions to help your group decide if the authority they are rebelling against has a rightful voice in their lives, if that authority is acting in line with biblical truth, and if there is a way to humbly submit or peacefully resist as a result of the previous questions.

Some people may fall into an unhelpful pattern of submitting to anyone with authority by default, whether or not that person has a helpful and correct voice of authority. Help your people recognize that a default pushback against authority and a default submission to authority could both be equally sinful.

Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Matthew 15:18-19. Do you find these verses hard to believe? If so why? What resistances rise up in you as you read them?

Leader Notes: Be careful here that the conversation doesn't get set up in such a rigid, black and white way that you get backed into a corner here. These verses do not mean that every single motivation of our hearts is pure evil, but they do expose the truth that our hearts are much less trustworthy than we tend to think they are.

- Can you think of times in your life when following your heart lead to pain for you or the people around you?

Reread John 8:31-32. What good and beneficial restrictions that Jesus gives us are you most inclined to want to rebel against? How can we encourage you to take steps of repentance?

Pray that we look to and follow Jesus instead of our hearts. **Pray** for the Holy Spirit to continue working in us to change our hearts and desires.