

Life Group Notes 1/21/2025

Laura Coffman

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Laura Coffman has raised this week, 9/25. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes.

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Laura Coffman introduced herself as the NextGen director at GCC. Do you have a testimony you can share about the Grace's ministry to the next generation? Take a moment to pray for them, and for all involved in serving the future church.

She started with some questions: "Do you think parenting is hard? Is it harder now than it used to be? What makes parenting more challenging today?"

1. What were your answers?
2. What does make parenting more challenging?
3. Did you make parenting easy for your parents?

She spoke of social media as a top influencer of children and parents?.

1. What are your experiences with social media?
2. Laura cited a study from the Lurie Institute at the Children's hospital in Chicago that states that 24% of parents have taken parenting advice from a social media influencer. What does this mean?
3. She says, "Many of them didn't do anything to vet the information to make sure it was credible." What does this make you think?
4. Have you taken advice from someone online?

She says, "On the other side with social media we have created a culture of fear, where we know too much and we read too much. I was reading an article recently about a mother in a small town in Georgia, who ended up getting arrested for allowing her ten-year-old son to walk to the store."

1. Have you ever heard anything similar?
2. What does this make you think?
3. Did you walk to the store when you were a child? At what age?
4. How does this story create fear and mistrust?

She mentioned how busy we are.

1. How does our busyness create difficulties in parenting?
2. What do you know about "helicopter parenting," the type that hovers around their kid to ensure they are safe?
3. What do you know about "snowplow parenting," who smooths the way, so the child has no conflict or difficulty, writing the note for the child who did not do the homework because they played soccer the night before until ten p.m.?
4. What is the problem with these types of parenting?

Laura suggests that "We as Christians tend to do the same thing. We want to create a wide/easy path." Look up Matthew 7: [13](#) *Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. [14](#) But small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

1. She says, "We are like snowplow Christians, because we do not want to offend." What do you see?
2. She continues, "Sometimes we do this for ourselves, because we're afraid to defend ourselves?" What do you see?
3. Do you deliberately avoid difficulty, and make the easy choices?
4. Are you afraid to be challenged. Laura says, "So we make following Jesus palatable for everybody including ourselves..." How can I make this easier for my life? We keep trying to widen the gate and make it easier to get through." Is this true?
5. Do you have a testimony?
6. She spoke of "wide truths," where we say, "...God can sort it all out. There's grace for that. I'm already redeemed." Have you heard of this? Have you said it?
7. She said, "Maybe we think it's 'OK' because it's culturally correct." Where would that apply? Have you heard it?

Laura explains, "We see a lot of things...a lot of 'truths' in churches, in Christians that seem to make sense, because there's some 'truth' to it. But," she continues, "that's the funny thing about Truth: you have to have the whole truth. So we tell 'wide truths.'"

- ✠ **The first wide truth we tell is, 'Come as you are.'** This is not untrue. We do want everyone to come as we are. But Jesus does seek the weary and the burdened. But, then He asks us to be transformed."
 1. What do you see?
 2. Is there a difference between "Come as you are..." and "Stay as you are...?" Explain.
 3. If He asks us to seek Him first, what is the result of seeking? What will you find?
 4. What will happen after your discovery? What changes?
 5. How will you know you are changed?

✠ **She says, “Another ‘wide truth’ that we tell is, ‘We just need to make the name of Jesus famous.’**

1. What does this mean? Is it enough?
 2. Do you know anyone in this country who has never heard the name before?
 3. What is it that should be made famous, beyond just the name?
 4. “We need to make famous what he has done for us. In fact, I need to make famous what He has done for me.” Explain.
 5. How do you go about making known to others Who He is? What needs to happen?
- ✠ **“Another wide truth we sell is, ‘Jesus hung out with sinners.’** This is not untrue...” but...

1. What happened when He hung out with sinners?
 2. Look up John 8: **10** *Then Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?”* **11** *“No one, Lord,” she answered. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Now go and sin no more.”* **12** *Once again, Jesus spoke to the people and said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.”* What do you see? Did Jesus hang out with her?
 3. What must change with this encounter. What is the alternative, if nothing changes?
 4. Now look up John 5: **13** *But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while the crowd was there.* **14** *Afterward, Jesus found the man at the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you.”* **15** *And the man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.* What do you see?
 5. What changes with the encounter? What does Jesus say is the alternative, if nothing changes?
 6. Why is “hanging out with sinners” a wide truth? What else does Jesus do?
- ✠ **“Another wide truth we tell: ‘It’s never too late.’”** I know this feels real good, and I know that at this moment, right now, it’s safe to say, ‘It’s not too late...yet!’ But I know that at some point it’s going to be too late.”
1. Explain. When will it be too late?
 2. Do we know when that moment is? Do we know what that moment will look like?
 3. Think of the two thieves that were hung on Jesus’ two sides? Which had a “never too late” experience.
 4. What happened to the other? Explain. Why was it too late? When does our freedom to choose end.
 5. In Luke 16, we find the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Examine the rich man’s plight, **24** *So he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am in agony in this fire.’* **25** *But Abraham answered, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things. But now he is comforted here, while you are in agony.’* **26** *And besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that even those who wish cannot cross from here to you, nor can anyone cross from there to us.’* What do you see?
 6. When did it become too late for the rich man?
 7. At what point should we not say, “There’s still time. I do not want to stress you out?”

Laura says, "Here's the problem. When we keep off the narrow road, we never find the treasure that is buried there. The narrow road seems challenging as if I have to do something difficult to stay on it. But there is something on that road that you can only find there and only if you are on it."

1. Explain. What supernatural gift is only found on the narrow road?
2. Why are supernatural peace, joy and real freedom only found there? Who else is found only there?

She says, "The kingdom is not there and then, it is here and now. When you keep yourself from this narrow road, you're keeping yourself from the impact of the Kingdom, here and now. You're keeping others from it, by not sharing your story."

1. In the parable above, are you the rich man? Or are you Lazarus?
2. Explain.

Laura tells the story of how she and her neighbor were cutting up the chicken for her middle school aged child, and then stopped.

1. Do you remember?
2. At what point do you let your child discover the processes that lead to life...cooking/sewing/fixing/repairing...cutting up their own meat?
3. Do you have a testimony?
4. How do you learn to let go?
5. How do you learn when to encourage others to let go...or not?
6. Have you ever had to let go of encouraging others to let go?
7. Have you ever carried burdens unnecessarily? Did you ever let go?
8. Do you have a testimony?

Laura begins to prophesy: "You are missing something that you can have here on this earth: When you take that baggage off and you begin to experience that kingdom here. Let me be clear: We are not building that kingdom. The kingdom is being built in here [in the heart]. It expands in us. It expands with us. And it expands outside of us. This is something that happens within you."

1. What are we missing when we ignore the kingdom and its expansion?
2. What do you see? What have you seen?
3. Can you put this in your own words? How does this work?

She continues: "You say, 'Someday I'm not going to have to suffer. Someday I'm going to break free. Someday my relationships are going to be fixed. Someday, I'm going to have this all figured out.' My encouragement for you today is to stop waiting. This gate is not going to get wider, neither will the road. It's not going to change. These words, this scripture are not going to change. They are going to remain the same. So we are going to keep trying. Keep seeking after God. We're going to keep pining for Him to experience the treasure, because I know that this world is broken. I know that this world is really hard. But this narrow road is paved with hope that is available to you, to everyone. This is encouragement is for you...and with it for you to encourage others to be brave."

1. What do you see?
2. Look up Luke 17:20 *When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God will not come with observable signs. 21Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is,' or 'There it is.' For you see, the kingdom of God is within you." 22Then He said to the disciples, "The time is coming when you*

will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it.” What do you see here? Do you notice anything strange?

3. Why will we not “see” those days, when the Kingdom is so very real and so very close?
4. What is required to see the Kingdom? Explain.
5. Look at what Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 4:19*But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only what these arrogant people are saying, but what power they have. 20For the kingdom of God is not a matter of word but of power. 21Which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and with a gentle spirit?* What responsibility do we have with our words?
6. Should we offend?
7. Look at what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2*Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and encourage with every form of patient instruction. 3For the time will come when men will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears they will gather around themselves teachers to suit their own desires. 4So they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.* How close are we to those times?
8. What is included with “preaching the word?” What is excluded?
9. Laura says, “We don’t want to offend people. Nobody gets to be mean.” When is rebuke not mean? When does rebuke not seem mean...for a season?
10. “We’re talking about encouraging people, telling people and explaining to them the freedom that awaits them.” Do you do this? Do you have steps you follow?

Laura speaks of the son who stayed home in the parable of the Prodigal Son. She says, “While the prodigal was gone, watching his inheritance diminish to nothing, this son knew where his meat lay.”

1. What was the prodigal able to do away from home that was good, healthy, lasting?
2. What could the stay-at-home son do?
3. What were the advantages for the stay-at-home son?
4. What treasures were on the path he had chosen?
5. Did the prodigal’s life have any advantages? Did he have fun that was lasting?
6. Did he know where to sleep? What could he eat?
7. Why did the prodigal come home in the end?
8. List the unforeseen advantages to choosing the narrow path over what the world offers?
9. Which son honored his father in the long run? Explain the importance.

Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. Look at what needs to be mended and healed in your situation? Journal the steps you can take.
3. Take one step. Journal the results.

Take the time to pray.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 7:13-14
Tuesday: John 8:10-12
Wednesday: John 5:13-15
Thursday: Luke 16:24-26
Friday: Romans 14:16-18
Saturday: 1 Corinthians 4:18-21
Sunday: 2 Timothy 4:2-4

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.