

## **“What’s going on?”**

+ Sunday August 25th is the last Sunday to bring laundry detergent for our Be Love campaign.

+ Interested in joining the LifePoint Kids Team? LP Kids consists of nursery through 5th grade and they would love to have you join their team. Contact Rachel Plattner (rplattner@lifepointqcy.org) to talk more about it!

+ Prayer is an important part of LifePoint’s DNA. One of the ways to partner with LP in prayer is to join us at our Pre-Service Prayer time. We meet every Sunday from 8am-8:25am in the multi-purpose room and would love for you to join us!

## **M A T T H E W 5 : 3 8 - 4 2**

### **I C E B R E A K E R**

**Question:** What is your favorite “revenge” movie / TV show? Think Taken or John Wick... stories where the main character suffers a loss at the hands of someone else and seeks payback.

**Question:** What’s so appealing about stories like this? Why do we love to see people get revenge?

### **C E N T E R I N G F O C U S**

Spend 5 minutes in silence together. Breathe deeply. Quiet your mind. Allow the worries, concerns, and distractions to dissipate from your mind.

Begin by praying something similar with the group:

*“Father, please quiet our minds and still our hearts. Protect us from the distractions that plague our thoughts stirring anxiety within our hearts. Please, fix our eyes on Jesus as we silently come before you to listen. Draw near to us. Allow us to feel your divine presence in our midst. May we be attentive to the still, small, quiet voice of your Spirit.”*

After 5 minutes, close your time of silence with prayer.

## LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Last week we continued to practice simplicity by practicing simplifying our speech.

**Question:** How was your experience practicing using simple speech? What did you notice about your speech? How did it help you focus on the Kingdom of God?

## THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

**Question:** What kinds of emotions lead us to seek payback or revenge?

**Question:** What are some reasons we forgive or seek forgiveness?

**Question:** Are you familiar with the phrase, "Don't get mad, get even"? What's appealing about this train of thought?

## ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 5:38-42 (ESV):**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.*

**Question:** Who does Jesus command us to *not resist*?

**Question:** *Resist* means to ignore or prevent interaction with. More than just avoiding the person, what else are we actually avoiding when we resist people who've wronged us?

Read **Matthew 5:39** in The Passion Translation:

*"However, I say to you, don't repay an evil act with another evil act. But whoever insults you by slapping you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well."*

**Question:** How does this change your perspective of this verse? What does this say about the idea of "resisting" people?

**Romans 12:17-21 (ESV):**

*“Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

**Question:** According to this passage, what are the imperatives or commands we’re given?

**Question:** When it comes to living peaceably with all, Paul gives a caveat. What does he say? Why is this important to note?

**Question:** Verse 17 tells us to do what is honorable in the sight of all. Can you think of a time that you or someone you know has interacted with someone, whether in person or online, in a way that wasn’t honorable? What does this do to our Christian witness? Why is it important to be honorable in front of all?

*John Piper, in an interview on the question, “How can I forgive my parents for childhood abuse”, said, “You don’t have to bear the awful weight of avenging yourself. Punishment will happen in hell, or will have happened on the cross. So you can let it go.”*

Read **Romans 12:19** again:

*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

**Question:** What does *vengeance* mean? (Look up the word in a dictionary and thesaurus for help)

**Question:** What are the ways that God demonstrates vengeance? (hint: read the above quote again.) Why is it so difficult for us to trust vengeance to the Lord?

**Question:** Now that you know the definition of vengeance, why is it so humbling and incredible that Jesus received vengeance?

Both in Matthew 5:40-42 and Romans 12:20-21, we see that we are not just called to trust vengeance to the Lord, but also to overcome evil with good, by giving more than is asked or expected of us. We're called to give our enemies more than they deserve.

**Question:** In what ways have you been given more than you deserve in Jesus Christ?

**Romans 5:8,10 (ESV):**

*"...But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."*

**Question:** What does God's kindness to us teach us about how we should interact with our enemies?

## **A P P L Y**

**Question:** When you think about enemies, is there someone you need to forgive? Someone you can serve?

**Question:** Is there a situation in your life right now where you want revenge, and you're struggling to let go? Why is it such a struggle? What is holding you back?

Spend time praying for one another!

## **N E W C H A L L E N G E**

As we continue to practice simplicity, we are going to be challenged to downsize. This could look a million different ways, so it's important to note that this is not a one-size fits all challenge.

Think of the things in your life that are extravagant or beyond usefulness. It could be a vehicle, a house, or a phone. It could also be a drink at Starbucks or a meal at Wendy's.

Practicing simplicity not only clears things out of the way so we can focus on one thing: the Kingdom of God, but it also reminds that nothing (no matter how big or extravagant or extra) will satisfy us but Christ, alone.