

GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2025

Series: Lives Changed by Jesus

Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

Life Groups are a critical ministry of our life together at Gynea Baptist Church where we want everyone to find their place in God's family and in God's mission. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

Each week's resource includes a brief overview of the sermon series and of the sermon (which can be accessed on GBC's YouTube channel or via your favourite podcast platform), along with a series of activities to do together. Don't forget that The Big Ill podcast comes out mid-week as another companion to the sermon.

These range from questions to ask, prayers to pray, practices to try, and biblical passages to read (usually in the time between Life Group meetings). Feel free to pick and choose what will work well for your group – you don't have to do everything!

We also include additional things that we are encouraging our Life Group leaders, as leaders of GBC, to be sharing with your groups. These include reflecting on a particular mission commitment of GBC, promoting and praying for GBC initiatives, and celebrating what God is doing in and through our community of faith.

If you have feedback on these resources please contact Nicole Jones at LifeGroups@gymeabaptist.org.au.



Lives Changed by Jesus: A Brief Introduction

This is our theme for 2025 and we will be returning to it several times over the course of the year. The theme is grounded in our strategic priorities of Community Engagement and Spiritual Journey and seeks to focus on the ongoing conversion we experience as followers of Jesus.

In this first sermon series, we will be focusing on characteristics that demonstrate a life changed by Jesus.

A Brief Overview of This Week's Sermon

Key Text(s): 1 John 3:16-18

“The first characteristic of a life changed by Jesus is a deepening love for the family of God. As we saw last week God’s plan was not simply to save individuals, but to save the Church. It is as part of the Church that we participate in God’s mission. In other words, it is one place we experience the transforming work of Jesus.

The Church (capitalised to distinguish the universal Church from the local church) is one of the most diverse groups on earth – men and women, young and old, rich and poor, from every nation, tribe, and language – and one of the most distinguished – loved, blessed, and saved by God!

As you can imagine, there is an enormous amount that could be said about the Church, but we focused on three areas in particular:

First, our love for the Church (or the church) flows from the love of God for the Church. God’s love for us and his plan to place us in his family invites us to love those he loves. It is a theological example of the common idiom, “Any friend of yours (in this case, Jesus) is a friend of mine”. This invitation is a central one in the New Testament as is reflected in the nearly sixty “one anothers” we find. We are to love one another (the most common), forgive one another, serve one another, and many others. In each case the source or foundation is God’s action towards us.

Second, our love for the family of God results in a growing family resemblance. Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, provided the model for all who would follow him by washing the feet of his disciples. His humble service, coupled with his sacrificial death, is the essential family trait. Just as there are some people who you can identify because of their family resemblance, we ought to share certain “mannerisms” that identify us as Jesus’ followers. Love for the church is one of these.

It is worth noting that the family of God doesn’t always do this well and there are times when we hurt each other; in some cases, quite badly. Without discounting the significance of the hurt we can experience we are called to love the family. If you have experienced hurt, don’t allow it to drive you away from the Church – find a church where you can continue to grow. And don’t bury that hurt either, but seek counsel and support to address it.

Third, our love for the family of God displays Jesus to the world. From the beginning of the Church, it is the love of believers for each other that has drawn people to Jesus. Jesus himself said that the world will know we are his followers if we love one another!

We have been saved into the family of God and it is in the family of God that we will continue to be shaped and formed by Jesus. The imperfect, flawed, and weak group of people is loved by God – Jesus died for the Church, his bride – and we are called to love her too.

Questions to Ask

1. How has the church (the local expression of the family of God) contributed to your growth as a follower of Jesus? (NOTE: Try to focus on the impact of people, not just programs or activities of the church.)
2. What sorts of things have you done (or could you do) to increase your love for the family of God?
3. To what degree would you say your love for the family of God is growing (e.g., A great deal, a bit, not much, not at all)? Is this the practice God is inviting you to develop over the course of 2025?

NOTE: The second part of this question is key for this series. If we want to continue to experience the transformation of Jesus, one thing we can do is focus on a particular practice. We don’t necessarily have to do everything all at once, but we are called to do something. This question is to help your group members identify an area to focus on.

4. If a new believer, or someone who was beginning to explore faith, asked your advice on one thing to do to increase their love for the family of God, what might you say to them?

A Prayer to Pray

Continue to pray for each other that the Holy Spirit would identify an area of our lives that He wants to align more closely over the course of 2025.

A Practice to Try

Select one of the pieces of advice from Question 4 and put it into practice as a group this week.

Readings to Read This Week

The following passages reflect on some of the “one anothers”. As you read them, use the four questions we have adapted to Read the Bible Together:

1. What stood out to you?
2. What questions does this passage raise?
3. What is God inviting you to in this passage?
4. Who can you tell what you have learned?

Romans 12:3-16

Ephesians 4:17-32

Colossians 3:5-17

1 Thessalonians 4:3-12

1 John 4:7-21

A Mission Commitment to Reflect on

Our theme – Lives Changed by Jesus – is also our vision as a community of faith and has two areas of focus. First, that we might see lives changed for the first time by placing their faith in Jesus. Second, that we might see change in our lives as we continue to follow Jesus. We hope to keep both of these in view over the course of the year.

There may be opportunity to identify those in our lives who are becoming more open to faith or who are exploring faith in Jesus who we might more prayerfully support and encourage this year.

A GBC Initiative to Promote/Celebrate

Each week we will provide you with a key aspect of our community news that we would encourage you to remind your Life Group about.

1. We are gearing up for our Annual Dinner on February 19. This is an opportunity to meet others who are part of GBC and to hear a bit more from Marc about where he believes the Lord is leading us. You can register through LinkTree, GBC News or [CLICK HERE](#).
2. And on GBC Links, please encourage your group to check their details on GBC Links; to update any details that have changed and to fill in the domains on passions, skills, and interests. This will enable us to invite them to be involved in areas that are more in line with who they are, and, if their details are correct, to invite them!

Additional Resources:

The mission commitments of GBC

We have made several references to the mission commitments of GBC. This is the title we have given to our vision, purpose, and values. These will no doubt be familiar to you, but we thought it might be helpful to provide a clear overview of them.

Our mission commitments begin with John 20:21, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”

These words contain a central belief about what we are called to as a community of faith: that we are to continue the ministry and mission of Jesus to restore and renew everything according to the will of the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we reflected on this commission, we formulated a mission statement to attempt to summarise what we wanted to do. While we don't refer to it very often, it is helpful to see the progression of our thought. **The mission we formulated was:**

Everywhere we go and in everything we do, we will invite everyone to follow Jesus.

Taking the pattern we find in the Gospels we affirm that anyone can begin to follow Jesus; regardless of what they believe about him, what they know about him, and without changing their lives. When Jesus called his first disciples, he demanded none of these things; only inviting them to follow him. Over time they learned about him which challenged their beliefs about him and raised the implications for their lives, but initially, they only needed to be willing to follow.

The individual transformation that comes as people place their trust in Jesus and the commission that he has sent us to participate in led to a simple **vision statement; what we want to see. *We want to see lives changed by Jesus.***

All of this took shape in our purpose as a community of faith – our “why”. ***To be a community of faith who courageously take up the invitation of God the Father to participate in His grand plan to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus through the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit.***

It was only as we gained clarity on our purpose that we identified a set of values that we believed were aligned with these mission commitments. The five values we identified are:

- To be ***On-Purpose***. Intentional to create margins in our lives to participate in God's mission.
- To be ***Big-Hearted***. Generosity in all our resources as a reflection of God's own generosity to us is a central value.
- To be ***Whole-Life Learners***. As followers of Jesus we are called to ongoing transformation of our lives; learning to be more like Jesus. This also invites humility as we recognise our ongoing need of change.
- To be ***Others-Focused***. To demonstrate love and care to others, over and above ourselves is a key characteristic of followers of Jesus.
- To be ***Trust-Worthy***. We don't want to get in the way as people begin to follow Jesus. We want to reflect this value in our commitment to being a Safe Church.

These are the mission commitments that we hope will serve to give us some common language that reminds us of our unity together as followers of Jesus and the community of faith here at GBC.