

# Connecting Group Study Guide

## *Knowing, Growing, Going*

Week of April 24-30, 2016

### Follow-up

1. Start by sharing with each other about your previous week.
2. Did you follow through on your commitment to read Scripture daily last week? Share about your experience with the group.
3. Did you verbally share your experience with someone else outside of your group last week? What happened? Share the experience with your group.

### Knowing God

Read Luke 18:9-14.

In this week's sermon, Sam reminded us of the *surprising* truth of God's grace—none of us can earn it; God's grace is an amazing gift in Jesus Christ. He pointed out from Genesis 21 that Ishmael is a picture of our human effort in achieving God's promises. On the other hand, Isaac is a picture of God's surprising grace to His people.

1. According to Luke 18:9-14, what may have been surprising to Jesus' audience when they heard this teaching? Is anything about this passage surprising to you in any way?
2. What insight(s) about God can we glean from this passage?

### Growing in Christ-likeness

1. Was there ever a time when you were "confident of your own righteousness" (Luke 18:9)? What did that look like? Did you learn anything from that experience?
2. Discuss the different attitudes and actions of the Pharisee and Tax Collector in this passage (Luke 18:10-13). What is the BIG difference between the two men?
3. Take some time to think about the life and ministry of Jesus. Where and how do we see him demonstrating this *surprising* grace in his ministry?

### Going to Our Neighbors and the World

1. According to Luke 18:14, which man was justified ("just-as-if-I-had never sinned") before God? According to this verse, what is characteristic of a justified believer in Jesus Christ?
2. Action Step #1: If God's grace is *surprising*, where in your own life do you need to receive and apply this amazing gift from God? What would it look like to take a step in this direction?
3. Action Step #2: As a Christ-follower and "an ambassador of grace," who in your context do you need to demonstrate this *surprising* grace to this week? Share with the group who you will attempt to show grace toward this week.
  - Maybe it is a co-worker that you have looked down upon; perhaps it is an "annoying" neighbor—Who have you "looked down on" that you need to show grace toward?

Close in prayer together—ask God to *surprise* you with His grace this week.