

Overwhelmed

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

So many of us are overwhelmed by things that keep us from living the life God wants for us. We struggle with things like depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, addiction and stress. But through the power of the Spirit and with help from others, we can tear down these strongholds. It requires the hard work of reframing our thoughts and shifting our behaviors, but we can be free!

Overwhelmed Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic
1	7/21/19	Depression, Anxiety, & Suicidal Thoughts
2	7/28/19	Addiction
3	8/4/19	(SOCIALS)

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Addiction

The Big Idea

Our inability to control our desires leads to our destruction.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: Share a story about a difficult teacher, supervisor, or authority figure that you have experienced.

Move #1: Let's begin the discussion with some questions unpacking Sunday's sermon.

1. What stood out most to you from the message this weekend?

Move #2: We are going to start out by looking at what Paul has to say about being slaves to sin and see how Christ has set us free to be slaves to righteousness.

Read Romans 6:15-23 (NIV)

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. What sort of mental pictures come to mind when you hear the word "slave" or "servant"?
3. What sort of mental pictures come to mind when you hear the word "addiction"?
4. It's easy to think of things like sex, drugs, and alcohol when we think about addiction. What are some destructive desires that don't typically get categorized as addiction?
5. What similarities do you see between addiction and slavery?
6. Paul says you can either be a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. Using the text, compare and contrast the results of these two kinds of slavery.

7. How does Christ set us free from the destructive slavery to sin and why is that important?

Note to Leader: For Move #3, have your group split into male and female groups (unless your group is already one gender). Some things are just hard to open up about in mixed company. Make sure that both groups have someone to lead the questions, and ask your host ahead of time if there is a separate space for both groups. It would be a good idea to let leaders know in advance so they can familiarize themselves with the questions and be prepared.

Move #3: For the next section, we are going to split the group between male and female. Addiction is a touchy subject, so we want to create a safe environment for people to open up about their struggles.

Read James 5:16 (NIV)

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

8. Have you ever been hurt or seen someone else hurt by addiction? What happened?
9. What are some areas of addiction that you have observed in your own life?
10. What have you done to try to overcome those areas? How are you turning to God for help?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. If you or someone you love is dealing with addiction, please don't go through it alone. Let us pray for you. (Gather around, lay hands on and pray in faith.)
2. If someone in your group is really struggling with tough addiction issues, encourage them to seek out help from the Care Center. Counseling is available, and we have Care Classes called Celebrate Recovery and Life's Healing Choices that are specifically designed to help people walk through overcoming addiction in a Christ centered way. More information can be found at: <https://pointcarecenter.com/careclasses/>
3. Continue to dialog about your struggles in a Core Group. If you do not have one, talk to your leader to see about joining one.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On Romans 6:15-23:

Having established that in principle believers are dead to sin, their identity defined by their union and future with Christ, Paul now exhorts them to live accordingly. If they are no longer slaves to sin (6:6), then sin must no

longer reign (*basileuō*) in them (6:12; cf. 5:14, 17, 21) or rule (*kurieuō*) them (6:14; cf. 6:9; 7:1; 14:9). They must be slaves who obey God and righteousness rather than sin (6:16–22). Jesus had preached the impending reign of God; Paul’s explanation of the new life in Christ and by the Spirit shows how he believes that God reigns in believers in the present (cf. 14:9, 17).

In 6:12 Paul warns against following the passions or illicit “desires” (cf. 1:24; 7:7–8; 13:9, 14) of the body destined for death. Whatever else “flesh” means (see the excursus after 7:14–25), it has some association with the body’s susceptibility to following its passions rather than deliberate submission to Christ. Bodily members can be used for evil (1:24; 6:6; 7:24; 8:10, 13), but they can also be presented to God’s service (6:13, 19; 12:1), presumably as members of a greater body (7:4; 12:4–5). The presenting of bodies to God as his “instruments” (6:13) and slaves (6:16) could perhaps evoke weapons for battle, a very common meaning of the term here for “instruments” (*hopla*; see 13:12; 2 Cor 10:4). Reckoning themselves new (6:11), believers must no longer view themselves as under death (6:12), but rather, as alive from the dead (6:13).

Paul again shocks the sensibilities of his audience by reversing traditional expectations. It is those under the law rather than those under grace who are prone to sin (6:14–15), which he will soon identify with lawlessness (6:19). Those of us in societies lacking many moral boundaries may appreciate the helpfulness of external laws, but Paul demands an inner transformation that yields a desire to submit to God’s will (8:5–9). One must serve either sin or righteousness (6:16–20). (Paul sometimes mixes his contrasts, e.g., sin leading to death versus obedience leading to righteousness in 6:16, but rather than weakening his antitheses Paul is strengthening the moral dualism established in 5:12–21, with everything bad on one side of the ledger and everything good on the other.) The “teaching” they obeyed (6:17) at least includes the gospel (16:17), which they embraced in conversion expressed in baptism (6:3–4). “Obeying” that teaching meant that they had left their past way of life, in which they used whatever freedom they had to serve their own interests, and now recognized a new lord and master over their lives, namely Christ (cf. 6:23; 10:9–10; 14:8–9).

Paul admits that his depiction of the rule of sin and righteousness in terms of slavery is merely a human analogy (6:19a), but it is, nevertheless, a very intelligible one for his audience. A former slave of a bad master would not want to return to that master; in the same way, no sensible person would want to return to a lifestyle the fruit of which was death (6:21). Paul has already established that sin brought death just as Christ’s obedience inaugurated righteousness (5:12–21). Why then would someone choose sin when they have the choice to embrace life? In 6:23 Paul shifts or reverts to an economic metaphor: household slaves often on the side earned some “wages” (though this term is often a military one). Wages were not a matter of grace, but of what one deserved (4:4, though using a different term). Sin merited death, but God’s free gift (*charisma*, 5:15–16) in Christ was eternal life, the life of the resurrection (cf. Dan 12:2). (Craig Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*)