



grow groups



## Week 2: The Gospel

# Fire Insurance vs. New Life in God's Kingdom

### GOAL:

Expand our vision of how the gospel transforms lives here and now as well as in the hereafter

### CHECKLIST

- Prepare for the meeting by praying for yourself and your group (feel free to use the prayer below) and reading through this Leader's Guide.
- Watch this week's teaching video together.
- Facilitate a conversation about new life in God's Kingdom.
- Watch the video that gives instructions for this week's Practice Assignment.
- Close with a time of gospel-focused prayer
- Take attendance in Planning Center, including guests/new members.

### PREPARING THROUGH PRAYER:

*Lord Jesus, I worship you today as my King, my Teacher, and my Friend. When I think about the new life you have given me, I am overwhelmed with gratitude! Thank you that through your death and resurrection, not only has my record been cleared and my future been secured, but every part of my life has been made new. I pray that as I follow you the Holy Spirit would open my eyes more and more to all the ways you are transforming my life. And as I marvel at your grace, I pray that you would give me the opportunity and the desire to share the good news of the gospel with the people around me. In your name I pray, Amen.*

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*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*

## CONNECT, COORDINATE, AND PRAY (10-15 minutes)

*Spend the first portion of your time together connecting relationally in whatever way works best for your group. Discuss any details you need to coordinate and spend a few minutes praying together. This might also be a good time to ask people to share anything that the Holy Spirit showed them through this week's Growth Guide readings.*

## Watch the Teaching Video (15 minutes)

*(Before you play the video, remind the group that during this series, part of the teaching will be delivered by video)*

### Video Instructions (at VRBC)

1. Turn on the TV and make sure you're on the Roku input (turn the Roku on if needed)
2. Click on the Youtube app
3. On the left side, scroll down to "Library"
4. Select the "This is My Story" playlist and click on the WEEK 2 Teaching video

### Video Instructions (at Home)

1. Open the Youtube app on your TV
2. Search "vrbcgrowgroups" (all one word)
3. You should see the VRBC logo with the title "Grow Groups." Select this option
4. Under "Playlists," select "This is My Story" and then click on the WEEK 2 Teaching video

## DISCUSS (20-30 minutes)

- What are the two contrasting views of the gospel that John illustrates with his story about the homebuyers?

**Leader's Note:** *In the illustration, John contrasted two views of the gospel: The first view holds that salvation is like an insurance policy, designed to make sure we spend eternity in heaven (like the couple who insured the home but didn't move in). The second view holds that salvation impacts every part of our life, both now and in eternity.*

*When we describe salvation only in terms of Jesus dying on the cross to save us from our sins so that we can go to heaven, we miss out on much of what Jesus meant when he said that he came to give us "abundant" life (John 10:10). The gospel isn't just about 'getting into heaven,' it is also about 'getting heaven into us.' We definitely celebrate the amazing fact that our sins are forgiven and our eternity is secured! But we also celebrate the way Jesus gives us new and abundant life now.*

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- Read John 3:1-6, Ephesians 2:1-10, and Colossians 1:13-4. What images do these passages use to illustrate what happens to us when we are saved by Jesus? Why do you think the authors use these specific images?

**Leader's Note:** *In John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are "born again." In verse 6, he says no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are "born of water and the Spirit."*

*Nicodemus was used to a system that rewarded knowledge of and obedience to the Law. He was a Pharisee, and Pharisees were known for their zeal in keeping the Law. Jesus uses a picture to help Nicodemus see that a relationship with God is not just about intellectual knowledge and rule-keeping. A relationship with God involves a supernatural gift of a completely new life. It's not a physical birth, it's a spiritual one. It's not a life aimed at trying not to sin. It's a life that is aimed at becoming the kind of person for whom sin just isn't interesting anymore. And that is a Spirit-empowered life.*

*In Ephesians, Paul describes salvation as going from death to life – in other words, resurrection. God "made us alive" or "raised us up with Christ." We are made alive spiritually. We now have the capacity to be transformed into the kind of people who can now live as the "masterpieces" God intended, created to do the good works God had planned all along.*

*In Colossians, Paul uses the imagery of a kingdom. We are rescued from the dominion of darkness where evil reigns and brought into a new kingdom where Jesus is King. This implies a new life, a new king, and a new purpose.*

**IMPORTANT:** *In these passages, Paul and Jesus are not describing what happens after we die our physical death. They are talking about the kind of life God has made available to them NOW through grace.*

- Why is the "fire insurance" view of the gospel less compelling and even harmful to our understanding of the Christian life? Why is the gospel as "new life in God's kingdom" more compelling and faithful to a scriptural understanding of the Christian life?

**Leader's Note:** *The "Fire Insurance" view of the gospel limits our salvation experience to only what happens after we die and doesn't speak to our life here and now. Thus, there is no connection to the idea of discipleship and learning how to live our lives in the kingdom of God. There is no impetus for spiritual growth or maturity. We just wait for heaven. Until then, our life isn't much different than anyone else's. CS Lewis describes it as living all our lives in the alley making mudpies, not realizing that we could be at the beach building sand castles. The rich, beautiful, courageous, comforting and empowering life with God in Christ that is possible in the midst of this earthly life is not experienced.*

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*This view also limits our witness. Because our view of salvation is limited to what happens after we die, we don't have compelling good news to share with our friends and neighbors that addresses the challenges they are facing right now. With a more holistic view of the gospel, we are able to share with others how Jesus can meet every need in their lives.*

*Another way the fire insurance view can limit our witness is that when we take this approach, we don't apprentice our lives to Jesus, and therefore don't experience the transforming work of the Spirit that allows us to live Christ-like lives. This results in us looking just like the rest of the world. (And what's compelling about that?)*

*The Bible describes salvation as entering a new life in God's kingdom. This change begins as soon as we place our faith (our full confidence) in Jesus as Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend. In this view, getting into heaven is not the only goal. Getting heaven 'into us' through the power of His Spirit is part of the goal! Heaven is just the next phase of an eternal life that already exists now. In the meantime, as we grow to be more like Jesus, we actually begin to live differently. We experience the abundant life that Christ came to give.*

*Just as important, we become the kind of people who learn how to love others as much as ourselves. We really do look different from those around us because we are learning to take on the character of Jesus. We participate in the mission of God to be a blessing and a light to the nations because we want to share the grace and love of God that we ourselves have experienced. Ephesians 2:7 says we become "trophy of God's grace" – living color examples to others of how God can meet our deepest needs and transform our lives.*

- In the video, John listed some of the new things that come to us as part of the new life in God's Kingdom. Which ideas resonated most with you? Why? What would you add?

**Leader's Note:** *Here's the list that John uses in the video. You might pick out a few of the items that the group found most compelling, read the scripture associated with each one, and discuss how it contributes to a vision of life in the kingdom of God as it is meant to be experienced.*

- *New leader (Jesus as King) – 1 Peter 3:15*
- *New path (Jesus as Teacher) – Matthew 7:24-27*
- *New companion (Jesus as Friend) – John 15:14*
- *New love (Received and given) – John 13:34*
- *New goal (Glorify and obey God) – 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 1:5*
- *New power (The Holy Spirit) – Ephesians 3:20*
- *New motivation (Gratitude, not earning) – Titus 2:11-12*
- *New hope (Jesus is coming back!) – Revelation 21:5*

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- How might this discussion shape how you tell your own story about your life with God?

*Leader's Note: If our past experience of sharing our story with others has been shaped by some version of the "fire insurance" gospel, we will tend to limit our story to how Jesus solved our sin problem so that we can go to heaven. While this is amazing and true, it's not the whole story! What if we told our story from the perspective of how we uniquely came to live in a whole new kingdom through Jesus and what life with God in that kingdom is like now as well as what it promises for our future?*

## **PRACTICE (10 minutes)**

Each week in the *This is My Story* series, we're asking each person to participate in a Practice Exercise designed to help us grow in our understanding of God's big story, how our story fits into his story, and how we can share it with others.

The instructions for this week's practice exercise are included in the second video in the YouTube playlist. You can access it using the same instructions you used to play the teaching video. Please note that during the exercise, we're asking you to pause the video for a few moments, break into smaller groups, and invite everyone to share what they wrote down last week as part of their practice exercise. You might want to divide the group into smaller groups of 2-3, or possibly just have each person share with the person sitting next to them.

## **PRAYER (5-10 minutes)**

As you close this week, lead the group in a time of prayer:

1. Thank God for loving us so much that he gave his only Son so that we might be born again – a new life in a new kingdom now and forever.
2. Ask God to teach us how to live more deeply into the fullness of life that he intends for us.
3. Ask God to show us how to share our story with others (through words and deeds) in a way that reflects the full beauty of life with him in his kingdom.