

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

### Message Summary

One of the worst feelings in the world is feeling trapped. For some, it's worse than others because they start to feel claustrophobic. For others, they simply feel unable to do anything about a current situation to make it better. When we're trapped, it can leave us feeling hopeless, overwhelmed, and tired. Unable to see the light at the end of the tunnel, we can turn to Jesus or find ourselves becoming victims or vicious. **When it comes to authority, just like gravity, what goes up must come down.** The good news about that truth is that we can go ALL THE WAY TO JESUS! Here are 2 reasons why that's encouraging:

1. **Jesus is higher:** If you're even a little claustrophobic, then you know the panic that can come from feeling confined, but the good news of the Gospel is that Jesus breaks the ceiling! Anytime we think that another human – whether dad or boss – has the final say over our lives, we've bought the lie that Jesus isn't higher than that person. Satan's lie is that we're at the mercy of others, but God's truth is that we're at His mercy, and when we're able to look past those in authority over us and see that Jesus is higher, we'll find that He is where our help comes from (Psalm 121:1-2).
2. **Jesus is better:** If Jesus was only higher, that wouldn't really comfort us, but the fact that He's better does because it means that we aren't helpless against harsh realities many of us face in fatherless homes or frustrating jobs. One reason Jesus is better is that He sees us! In Ephesians 6, God addressed 2 classes of people who were overlooked and ignored: children and slaves. But God saw them and spoke to them, and the presence of a heavenly Father can make all the difference! Another reason Jesus is better is because He rewards us. When we seek Him, He promises to reward us (Hebrews 11:16) with blessings that only He can give us. That means we're no longer trapped by what our earthly fathers or bosses can – or can't – give us. Turning our attention from earthly authority and toward heavenly authority means that if there's no father, there can still be a Father who will surround that child with community in the church. And that is always good news!

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- As you've thought back through this week's message, what one thing – if any – inspired you or maybe even confused you?
- How does our view of our fathers shape our view of God as our Father in both good ways and bad?
- Read the following passages about the power of God and discuss any insights you may have from them.
  - Psalm 135:5                      - Job 33:12                      - 2 Chronicles 2:5
  - Proverbs 19:21                  - Isaiah 45:6-7                  - Matthew 19:26
  - Psalm 22:28                      - Proverbs 16:4                  - Psalm 115:3
- Can you think of a time that you weren't seen by a parent or a boss but you were seen by God in that same situation? Talk about what you learned through that.
- How difficult is it to keep a "God perspective" when dealing with difficult authority relationships? What are some ways that your Community Group can help you? Close the night taking the time to pray for one another and the various circumstances in which we find ourselves.
- These Scriptures can offer comfort to people in your Group who are struggling with the "fatherless" part of the message: Psalm 68:5; Genesis 16:13; James 1:27 (how community in church helps)