



**Growth Groups  
Travel Guide  
Week of April 1-7, 2007**

Welcome back! I hope and pray that everyone had a productive and/or restful week off from Growth Groups for Spring Break. As a reminder, this coming Sunday is Easter, and Journey Church will be having an *Easter EGG-Stravaganza* for children and their families. We will have an Easter Egg Hunt, Moonwalk, pictures with the Easter Bunny, and more! Additionally, we will be starting a new series of messages: *Rolling Stones*. This Sunday could be a huge turning point for our church, and we are hoping it will turn out to be bigger than we could ever imagine . . . so invite as many disconnected people as you can this coming week – especially families!

BUT, let's not get ahead of ourselves . . . this week, Eric taught us about how following the vision for Journey Church is also following Jesus and becoming more Christ-Like.

**Luke 9:51:**

*“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”*

- **Have you ever been so convinced that God was calling you to do something that nothing could change your mind? What convinced you so strongly?**
  
- **What was the craziest thing you think God has ever asked you to do? How did you respond, and what were the results?**
  
- (Luke 19:41-44) **Have you ever broken down and wept for Auburn/Opelika specifically because you longed for them to believe in Jesus? What prompted you to such a passion-filled breakdown?**
  
- **What is the overall significance of the cross and resurrection in world history?**
  
- **What is the significance of the cross and resurrection for you personally? How does this significance affect how you live your life?**



Auburn, Alabama

Hey folks!

**Growth Groups  
Leader's Travel Guide  
Week of April 1-7, 2007**

I specifically want to welcome you, our Growth Group leaders back from Spring Break! I truly appreciate your willingness to serve here at Journey.

Eric and I went to a Church Planters' Round Table this week at Ridge Stone Church in Canton, GA. It was a great experience for both of us to be able to compare what we learned there to the things we learned at the Church Planters' Conference at Mountain Lake Church just over a month ago. Both churches are using Message-Based curriculum, and have found it to be essential to building a healthy home-based small groups ministry. Particularly, both of these churches are at the forefront of reaching disconnected people in their communities. They have found (as my reprint of Casey's letter to his group leaders stated 2 weeks ago) that the message-based small groups are extremely helpful with getting disconnected people connected, trained, and serving in the church.

Mountain Lake is now about 7 years old, has built a facility (which they have already outgrown twice), and is running over 2,000 people on the weekends. Mountain Lake has hit a tipping point recently and baptized just under 350 people in the past two weeks (a number churches 10 times their size rarely see in a year!) Ridge Stone is only two and a half years old and is outgrowing the local movie theater, but wants to remain portable as long as they can. They are running over 600 people on the weekends and are considering multiple sites within the next year. While Mountain Lake has most of their attenders actively involved in small groups, Ridge Stone failed to get their small groups ministry going early. The leadership at Ridge Stone openly admit that they are way behind in getting their people involved, and regret not getting the groups going and on a message-based curriculum earlier in the life of the church.

Why do I want to give you so much information about two churches in significantly different areas and stages of life than Journey Church? Because I want you to know that I am passionate about what those churches are doing in their communities, and long for Journey to make the same kind of impact in Auburn/Opelika, Lee County, and the world. These churches are making an impact for a few, but absolutely essential reasons:

First, *they are creating a buzz in the community* because the churches are doing crazy and innovative things to get attention in the community - one of the biggest buzzes they get is when they do something to stir negative response from other church people in town. I don't know how crazy we might get down the road, but if we're going to be serious about reaching disconnected people, we're going to get some churchy people mad at us.

Second, *the people attending those churches are excited about what is happening, have ownership in the church through serving, and are talking it up around town.* I believe the Growth Groups are a key for us to begin to develop this element at Journey. I hope your group is serious about finding ways to serve.

Third, *they do what they do with excellence and try very hard to always be who they say they are.* When something happens that doesn't reflect well on who they say they are, they are quick to admit it, adjust, and move on. You know I am constantly refining how the Growth Groups material looks and functions. I am experimenting to discover what will work best for us at Journey as I learn stuff from other churches. However, we are committed to message-based curriculum. We are committed to keeping it simple enough for disconnected people to be involved. We are committed to making it deep enough for Christ-followers to be built up. And we are committed to growing and multiplying the groups as Journey continues to grow. I invite your feedback on what has worked, what doesn't, and how your group can be improved. I can't guarantee your suggestions will be implemented, but they will be helpful for our evaluation and to improve this vital arm of Journey Church as we seek to transform ordinary people into passionate Christ-followers!

God bless, and have a wonderful week!

Andrew

Welcome back! I hope and pray that everyone had a productive and/or restful week off from Growth Groups for Spring Break. As a reminder, this coming Sunday is Easter, and Journey Church will be having an *Easter EGG-Stravaganza* for children and their families. We will have an Easter Egg Hunt, Moonwalk, pictures with the Easter Bunny, and more! Additionally, we will be starting a new series of messages: *Rolling Stones*. This Sunday could be a huge turning point for our church, and we are hoping it will turn out to be bigger than we could ever imagine. . . so invite as many disconnected people as you can this coming week – especially families!

BUT, let's not get ahead of ourselves . . . this week, Eric taught us about how following the vision for Journey Church is also following Jesus and becoming more Christ-Like.

**Luke 9:51:**

*“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”*

1. **This verse is a key verse in the Gospel of Luke, and is therefore a key point in Jesus' ministry.** From this point on, everything we read in Luke's Gospel is about how Jesus' life and ministry was moving toward Jerusalem for one specific purpose: **Jesus knew he would be arrested and killed in Jerusalem, and three days later rise from the dead.** Several times in the intervening chapters, people tried to get Jesus away from this goal. Even the disciples tried to stop him when he talked about being killed.
    - **Have you ever been so convinced that God was calling you to do something that nothing could change your mind? What convinced you so strongly?**
  
  2. Eric showed us in Luke 19 that Jesus sent some disciples ahead to take some stranger's donkey. From our perspective, we could ask many questions about this incident, but for the disciples that were asked to go, two questions stand out: “How did he know the donkey would be there?” And, “How did he know the owner would let him use it?”
    - **What was the craziest thing you think God has ever asked you to do? How did you respond, and what were the results?**
  
  3. In **Luke 19:41-44**, the writer tells us that Jesus wept for Jerusalem when he saw the city. According to the passage, the reason Jesus wept was because he knew that the city would not believe that Jesus was their long-awaited Savior, and the city would be destroyed because of their unbelief.
    - **Have you ever broken down and wept for Auburn/Opelika specifically because you longed for them to believe in Jesus? What prompted you to such a passion-filled breakdown?**
  
  4. Eric spoke about Jesus's passion for us leading him to the cross. He said that because of the cross and the following resurrection of Jesus from the dead, everything changes.
    - **What is the overall significance of the cross and resurrection in world history?**
- Here, I encourage you to follow two particular directions:
- ▶ you can focus on a lot of generic things like it's a foundation point for Western Civilization, etc.
  - ▶ you can focus on more spiritual items such as:
    - Centerpoint of History - God's plan for all of history was to redeem mankind from their sin into a relationship with Him.
    - Shifted the focus of God's people from the Jews calling all people to come to Jerusalem to worship God to Christians seeking to go throughout the entire world to take the message of God's plan to everyone.
    - **What is the significance of the cross and resurrection for you personally? How does this significance affect how you live your life?**
5. Eric specifically stated that the cross reminds us of forgiveness, healing, restoration, grace, mercy, trust, etc.
  6. The cross is the ultimate symbol of the extent of God's love for us and desire for us to know Him.
  7. If we are going to be passionate Christ-followers, the cross becomes the pinnacle example of what it means to follow Christ.
  8. This question is an opportunity to find out the spiritual condition of your group members. Be prepared to encourage spiritual decisions and help group members make those decisions as you discuss this question.