

**Life Group Leader's Guide**

# **The God Who Can Change Us** *.....from the Inside Out*



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# Introduction

## The God Who Can Change Us

### *...from the Inside Out*

These exciting passages highlight many of your favorite, well known Old Testament characters and in some cases; they are not so well known. They help us discover the many unique, amazing and unexpected ways God chooses to use His people. It shows their strengths, their weakness, and how God's presence, power and provisions changed them "from the Inside Out" to accomplish things far beyond what they could have imagined.

These passages help us learn about God's amazing character and the character of people which is revealed by their many challenging circumstances and relationships. They teach us who God is, who we are, and how He wants to interact with each of us to accomplish His Plan.

When God is **IN US**, he can **CHANGE US** to work **THROUGH US**.

#### **Ephesians 3:20**

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

*To Our Amazing Life Group Leaders,*

*I'm excited to see each of you partner with God in your Life Groups to move these passages from each person's **Head**, to their **Heart** and then to their **Feet**! The best part is that we are doing it together!*

*Pastor Frank Bonser*

Let's get started.....



# The God Who Can Change Us

*...from the Inside Out*

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## How to use this Leader's Guide

*The group story-telling and discussion time consist of five separate parts:*

### 1. Review: (2-3 Minutes)

Take a short time to review last week's passage and draw out key points that were learned. Caution: Do not create a discussion. Example questions could be:

- a. What was one thing you remember about last week's story? or,
- b. Did someone last week say something that was particularly meaningful to you this week? Please elaborate. or,
- c. Did you find yourself sharing the story with anyone? Who? or,
- d. Ask follow-up questions of individuals who shared a particular action they were going to take as a result of last week's passage.

### 2. Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)

- a. Briefly set the context of this week's passage.
  - Here is what has happened since last week's story and some context to this week's story.
- b. Next, ask a couple of general questions as an introduction to stimulate the group's thoughts about the upcoming passage. They help get the group focused on the story that is about to be told.
  - Example: Say, before we start the story, I would like you to be thinking about a couple things.

### 3. Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)

- a. Tell the story as best as you can in your own words.
  - Don't stop to teach or try to make points. Just tell the story.
  - This is not a performance; just think of sitting around a campfire and telling it in your own words.
  - The objective is not to memorize it, but to learn it and be able to just share it.

### 4. Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)

Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions.

- a. What was the first thing that happened?
- b. What Happened next? Then what happened? Then....?

If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

- a. Don't stop for discussions. Keep moving through the passage until it has been completely rebuilt.
- b. Remember the **purpose** is to:
  - Get everyone to participate.
  - Make sure the passage is accurate. Nothing added or left out.
  - Help learn and remember the passage through repetition.
- c. Participants will experience the passage four different ways.(Repetition)
  - Individually read it before they come.
  - Hear it told orally in the group.
  - Participate in rebuilding it together.
  - And finally, discuss it in detail as a group.

5. **Group Discussion: (35-45 Minutes)** The group discussion time consists of three different types of questions: **Head, Heart and Feet**. Each of these has a specific purpose and should not be skipped.

**Basic Questions:** (What does the passage say?)

These four questions can be used to start a discussion each week. You may not have time to cover all four which is good.

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God? (Jesus or the Holy Spirit?)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:** (What does the passage mean?)

These are extremely important questions for your group. They not only can stimulate great discussion and prompt your group members into action; they can also allow you to see into a person's heart in significant ways. There are two ways to ask life application questions:

- Use story specific questions provided in the guide, or
- Form your own questions based on hearing an individual's comments during the discussion time.

There is no particular order to ask these questions. They are used to guide the facilitator in asking follow-up questions that will reach people's hearts.

**Life Application Questions:** (What should we do with what we've learned?)

1. How is God asking you to respond to this passage? or,
2. What do you think God is putting on your heart to do with this passage?
  - **Important:** The Life Application Question(s) are the most important questions and are the purpose of the discussion. This is where people put the scripture into action.

**Tips:**

- Do not skip the Basic or Other Applications Questions. They set up the Life Application Questions.
- Manage your discussion time well to ALWAYS arrive at this question(s) with at least 10-15 minutes of discussion time left. It is intended to be the most meaningful time of the group meeting.

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Each discussion page will have some thoughts to assist in how the group can pray for each other and for the Life Group based on the context of the passages that were just reviewed.

# Creation of Us

## Genesis 1:1-31

(God)

### **Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The best way to describe the context of this passage is simply, "In the beginning". Walking through this passage together will remind us and help us discover the amazing attributes and character of God and his limitless love for us. Let's begin and the beginning.

### **Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

### **Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus or the Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

### **Other Application Questions:**

1. What time of day are you most creative? Do you get more work done on your day off or your work day?
2. If you could create a new world, what would it be like? What would be the most important features?
3. How aware are you of the created world in your everyday life? What do you find most impressive about it?
4. What does the six days of creation highlight for you? How would you describe God's work? Why do you think God rested on the seventh day?
5. What does it mean to you to be created in God's image? How does this term affect your relationship with God? With others?

### **Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

### **Prayer Thoughts:**

God, you are the beginning and the end. You revealed your splendor in your creation and your image in us. We are humbled by this passage to remember who you are and what you have entrusted us with, your creation. Lord let us treasure all that you have given us. Most of all, let us love and care for one another in ways that are worthy of your image.



# Blessed By God

## Genesis 2:15-25

(Adam and Eve)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

God's sovereignty and wisdom is expressed through His creation. He made all things, including animals and man for different purposes. He created the world with order and to function so that we can live in it and enjoy it. He put people in charge of the world. Let's begin by hearing the story of God's first created people.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus or the Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What do we learn about our original nature and character, purpose and tasks?
2. What is significant about God creating woman?
3. Why do you think God said it was not good for Adam to be alone?
4. What did God mean when he described woman as a "helper"?
  - a. God Himself is often described as a helper (Hosea 13:9, Ps 115:9-11).
  - b. How does that help you in answering this question?
5. How would you characterize the relationship between Adam and Eve? Why were Adam and Eve naked and not ashamed?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Thank God for making us in His image and ask him to show each of us what part He wants us to play in His Kingdom.

# Messed Up By Sin

## Genesis 3:1-23

(Adam and Eve)

**Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

God displayed His splendor in the creation of the world including Adam and Eve who were made in His image and for His purpose. Let's see how Adam and Eve's relationships develop as they experience the freedom in the garden that God had given them.

Delete All Questions. Combine into one paragraph.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What food do you find especially tempting?
2. Why did God command Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of Good and Evil?
3. How are you most frequently tempted?
4. Why do you think Adam eats the fruit?
5. How do Adam and Eve respond to their sin?
6. How do you tend to respond to your sin?
7. How did their sin affect their relationships with each other? With God?
8. What characterized God's response to their sin?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise God for His mercy and love for us which goes beyond anything we can earn. Pray that each one of us step into God's love and grace to strengthen us and continue to change us to be more like His Son Jesus.

# The Hurt of Anger

## Genesis 4:1-16

(Cain and Abel)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

3. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
4. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (3 Minutes)**

God blessed Adam and Eve with two sons, Cain and Abel. They brought their sons up to know Him and they each worship God with different hearts and got different responses. Let's see how their relationship with God influences their relationships with others.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What makes you really angry in life?
2. How do you tend to express your anger?
3. Why do you think God rejects Cain's sacrifice?
4. How would you assess the way you handle your anger?
5. What would you like to do differently with your anger?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise God for the amazing way He cares for us each day. Pray that He leads us in unity and relationships that would honor and glorify Him.

# Persistent Obedience

## Genesis 6:1-22

(Noah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The earth continued to be populated for generations from the offspring of Adam and Eve. The hearts of people began to become corrupt and evil continued to grow and prevail among them. Let's see how Noah responds to a very unusual command from God.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. How would you describe the human condition at this point?
2. What does it mean that "God was grieved that he made man"?
3. How would you describe Noah?
4. What is God's greatest desire in His relationship with us?
5. Why do you think God chose Noah?
6. How does Noah persevere when the going gets tough?
7. How would you describe God after the flood?

**Life Application Question:**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise God for his desire to have a relationship with us in spite of who we are and what we do. Pray that god gives us the strength and perseverance to be obedient to his word and in full alignment to his will for our lives.

# Following God's Call

## Genesis 12:1-20

(Abraham)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

God choose Noah, as a righteous man, for a new beginning for the human race. Noah's offspring grew for generations into great nations and spread out over all earth after the flood. The Lord called on men of all stature to lead his people. Let's see how Abraham responds to a call from God to lead a great Nation.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What does God command and promise Abraham?
2. What might have been his initial fears and reservations?
3. What are things that hinder you from consistently trusting in God's promises?
4. Describe Abram's response to God's call. (vv. 4-6)
5. Why do you think God reassured Abram of his promise when he arrived at Canaan?
6. What are ways that God reassures you as you follow Him?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise God that He has given us His Word, and instruction, encouragement and clarification of His purpose for us. Pray that we will search His Word for the commands and promises He has for each one of us.

# Laughing Fear

## Genesis 18:1-15

(Sarah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

God choose, commanded, and promised to make Abraham into a great nation. Abraham and his wife Sarah did not bear children as they thought God had promised and began to take things into their own hands to fulfill the great nation that God promised. Let's see how Abraham and Sarah trust in God's promise to "make a great nation".

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What makes you laugh the most? When was the last time you laughed really hard? What was it about?
2. What is your favorite style of humor?
3. Why does Sarah laugh? What kind of laughter is it?
4. What do you find laughable in this story? Why?
5. When God tells you something great that He has done or wants to do, how do you tend to respond?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise God that He has never broken a promise to us. He keeps them all. Pray that we remain faithful and trust in the fact that God wants the best for each of us and will fulfill every promise given to us.

# Faith Tested

## Genesis 22:1-19

(Abraham)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

God gave Abraham and Sarah their promised son, Isaac, and will now use him to test Abraham's faith. Will the fulfillment of another promise allow Abraham to fully trust in God? Let's see how Abraham responds this time to one of his greatest tests of faith.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Why did Abraham take his son to the altar?
2. What do you learn about Abraham from this story?
3. What do you think Isaac felt as he walked with his father?
4. What did God desire from Abraham?
5. What did Isaac learn from this experience?
6. Where do you sense God is testing you now? How are you doing with the test? What are you learning from it?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise the God that makes and keeps promises. Pray that our faith is strengthened on the promises God has already fulfilled (sending His Son Jesus), and that our hope and faith remain steadfast on the promises yet to come. Pray that God continues to fulfill His promise of not giving any of us more that we can bear, and that He will equip us for every circumstance that we are led into.

# Toe to Toe with God

## Genesis 32:9-32

(Jacob)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Jacob had multiplied and prospered beyond measure just as God had promised him. He was preparing to meet his brother Esau and Jacob was fearful and distressed about that meeting because of the past circumstances of snatching his father, Isaac's, birth right away from Esau. Let's see how Jacob prepared for this meeting with his brother Esau.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What happens when you take on a threatening challenge?
2. What was one meeting you dreaded – angry boss, ex-spouse, in-laws, etc.?
3. Why did God choose to wrestle with Jacob?
4. Why didn't God defeat Jacob immediately?
5. Why would God wrench Jacob's hip?
6. Why did God change Jacob's name to Israel?

**Life Application Question(s)**

1. How is God asking you, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, we praise you as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We praise you that you are the same then, now and you will remain unchanging. You are God and we are not. We pray that you DO change us. We pray that each of us will grow in our relationship with you, that we remain obedient to you and we call upon you in the relationships that we have with family, friends, co-workers and ask that they all honor you.



# Betrayed

## Genesis 37:12-36

(Joseph)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Tonight we will cover a passage that involves another character that you may be familiar with - Joseph. Joseph was a young man who had grown up in a family of many other brothers. His father, Jacob, now called Israel, loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Joseph's brothers saw their father's favoritism towards him. They grew to hate him and wouldn't say a kind word about him. Let's see how the relationship between Joseph and his brothers are affected by this growing favoritism from their father.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Growing up, how well did you get along with your brothers and sisters? Who was the baby of the family? How was that person treated?
2. How has your relationship changed with your siblings now that you are older? What do you attribute the change to?
3. How do you account for why Joseph's brothers did what they did?
4. What is one of your biggest regrets so far in life?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we thank you that you are a God of impartiality and show no favoritism towards any one of us. We pray that our actions towards others would be truthful and meant to build them up, not tear them down.

# When Temptation Finds You

## Genesis 39

(Joseph)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Joseph was sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, in Egypt and is faced with some difficult circumstances. Not only was Joseph betrayed by his own brothers but his situation seems to be getting even worse. Let's see what happens to Joseph in this passage and how he responds.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. In what job or school setting have you enjoyed the most success?
2. Why do you think God allowed this to happen?
3. When are you most tempted?
4. What characterized the temptation?
5. What characterized Joseph's response to the temptation?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we ask for your strength and wisdom to flee from temptations. We pray that you are able to use us in all circumstances to glorify your Son and bring the Good News to the lost.

# The Inadequacy of Inadequacy

*Exodus 3:1-15*

*(Moses)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

This passage is about another Bible character that was changed in an amazing way by God, Moses. The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt and Moses, a Hebrew, was raised in Pharaoh's household by his own daughter. When Moses was about 40 years old (Acts 7:23), he saw the Hebrews being abused and he ended up killing an Egyptian. It became known what he did and he fled to Egypt. He went to Midian, got married and he was there for 40 years (Acts 7:30). Now he is about 80 years old out tending his Father-in-laws sheep. Moses is about to have an encounter with God; let's see how he responds.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What motivates God to act on behalf of his people (vv.7-10)?
2. Why do you think God chose an aged desert shepherd to lead such an incredible venture?
3. When have you felt inadequate to do something God wanted you to do?
4. What reassurance does God give Moses (vv. 12-22)?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, you know we are hopeless and helpless to do your works without you. We pray that you will count us worthy to serve you and give us the courage and wisdom to do so.

# Letting Others Share the Load

## *Exodus 18* *(Moses & Jethro)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Under God's hand, Moses led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. God provided manna, quail, and water for them; however, the Israelites grew in numbers and continued to grumble about their circumstances and even grumbled against Moses as their leader. Moses was becoming overwhelmed with the needs and demands of God's people as he tried to satisfy them. Let's see how one of God's leaders deals with being faced with an overwhelming responsibility.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. At this point, which is stacked higher – your “in basket” or your “out basket”? How are you coping?
2. Of what value is it to have a friend to whom you can tell everything?
3. How do you tend to carry too much of the load in life?
4. What were some key elements in Jethro's counsel?
5. How did Moses respond to Jethro's counsel (vv. 19-26)?
6. How open are you to seeing God's counsel through your parents, friends, spouse, and in-laws?
7. How do you decide when to delegate and when to do it yourself? What makes it so tough to let go and let others do it?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Dear God, you know that we can't accomplish many of your works on our own. Thank you for teaching us that we are better together. We pray that we are able to see through your Word and those that you connect us with, how to teach and delegate tasks for a greater achievement of your works.

# Overcoming the Impossible

*Numbers 13:26-14:10*

*(Caleb)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Moses had led the nation of Israel by God's hand to the edge of Canaan, which was the long awaited land that God had "promised" them. Moses sent out men as scouts to explore the land and bring back reports of what the land was like. Were the people strong or weak? How many were there? When they returned, ten of the reports were less than favorable saying it was impossible. Two, on the other hand, reported that it was very possible. Let's see how the different reports from the scouts affect Moses and the people of Israel.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. How do you respond when confronted with a seemingly impossible situation?
2. How does Caleb's perspective differ from that of the majority (v.30)? What set Caleb (and Joshua) apart from the other spies?
3. How do the people react to the differing perspectives (14:1-4, 10)?
4. Why is the temptation so great for them to return to Egypt?
5. What thoughts and feelings would you have had as you listened to both sides of this debate?
6. How do Joshua and Caleb respond in the midst of the tremendous unbelief of the people (vv. 6-9)?
7. What are the "giants" confronting you today? Our "church" is confronting today?
8. Read Josh. 14:6-14. How does this passage strike you, being that Caleb is now 80 years old?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, you are the one true God. We praise you that your promises are that you are for us, so who should we fear that is against us? Protect us Lord and give us the courage to claim your promises given to us through your Son Jesus.

# Surprising Faith

## Joshua 2:1-21

(Rahab)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Moses has passed away and the Lord called has Joshua to lead the nation of Israel across the Jordan into the Promise Land. Joshua sent two spies to look over the land, especially Jericho. The spies entered the house of a prostitute and stayed there, but they were soon discovered by the King of Jericho. This creates a most unusual circumstance that displays God's protection. Let's see how the spies in this passage may have been surprised and what we think God wants us to learn from it.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. If you went incognito as a spy, what kind of identity would you want?
2. When you were in high school, what is one of the most daring things you tried?
3. Why did the two spies go straight to a prostitute's house?
4. How do you think Rahab related to God at this point (e.g., closet believer, not a believer, etc.)?
5. What do you think calmed her anxiety as she waited for the Israelites to come?
6. How did Rahab's actions affect her family?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, thank you for showing us the way in which you are always working behind the scenes to accomplish your work. We pray that each of us recognizes the work you are doing in and through others, and understand the important role and actions we must take in our lives.

# Crossing Floodwaters

Joshua 3-4:8

(Joshua)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Last week the spies were hidden by Rahab and she told them that a great fear had fallen over their country because they had heard about "The Lord, their God, who is God of heaven above and on the earth below". The spies returned to Joshua and reported that the people are "melting in fear because of us." It was time to prepare. Let's see how Joshua continues to be led by God, and leads the nation across the Jordan.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What was one of your most memorable mishaps while camping, fishing, hiking, etc.?
2. While waiting to cross the Jordan, what you suppose the people were doing?  
Feeling?
3. What does the ark signify (vv. 3-5, 11)?
4. Why must they wait to see the ark and then keep their distance from it?
5. What does Joshua's call "to consecrate yourselves" imply?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, thank you for your Servant Joshua and for giving him to us as an example of how to listen, obey and serve you. We pray that we learn from Joshua that doing right is more important than doing well.

# Sin's Impact

## Joshua 7:1-26

(Achan)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The effect of individual sin is greater than we understand and can have devastating consequences. Israel discovered the deadly, far-reaching effect of individual sin during her conquest of Canaan around 1300 B.C. In the midst of a miraculous victory at Jericho (Josh 6), Achan took several items that were devoted to the Lord. Israel experienced the consequences of his sin in their next battle against the smaller city Ai. Let's review this passage and see what God wants to teach us by showing us Achan's sin.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Have you ever felt that God withdrew his blessing from a church or an activity of the church?
2. When you or your church experiences a setback, how do you respond?
3. What are the consequences of sin?
4. What kinds of things happen in our lives when we sin and try to hide it?
5. As with the Israelite, has the Lord ever had to get tough with you to get you back on track? Please explain.
6. Do you think it was fair for God to punish all Israel because just one person sinned? Why or why not?
7. Describe Joshua's fears in your own words (vv. 6-9).
8. Why do you think God held all of Israel responsible for the sin of one person?
9. What was the root cause of Achan's sin against God?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we know that you are righteous, just and can't tolerate sin. Thank you for this passage that reminds us that sin must be punished and that your promises are dependent on our obedience to you.



# God's Timing

## Judges 4:1-16

(Deborah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The Israelites continued to do evil in the eyes of the Lord; they forgot the Lord and worshiped Baals and the Asherahs. The Lord was angered against Israel and turned them over to the hands of many Judges. Let's see how Deborah was able to lead Israel in a time of great judgment from the Lord.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Why did the Israelites do evil in God's sight?
2. What was God's response to their apostasy?
3. What was the most important qualification Deborah had that God needed in the leader?
4. What was Barak's problem (v.8)?
5. Why is it easy for us (you) to drift away from God?
6. How have you experienced God's deliverance?
7. When have you had a time in your life where you had a keen sense of God's timing (as does Deborah)?
8. Where in your life do you wish you possessed Deborah's certainty and confidence?
9. If God were to tell you something specific about the future, what one thing would you like Him to tell you?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we know that you never drift away from us or have us out of your sight for a moment. Lord, give us a repentant and obedient heart that allows you to lead us through life's difficult and challenging circumstances. Help us to not focus on how we see it affecting us, but on what effect you want our circumstances to have on us. What can we learn?

# Finding Courage

## *Judges 6:1-40* (Gideon)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The Israelites became stronger as they came back under the favor of God and enjoyed 40 years of peace in the land. However, once again they did evil in the eyes of the Lord, fell under His judgment, and again cried out to the Lord. This time the Lord sent them a prophet named Gideon. Gideon was not so sure he was equipped to accomplish the task that God was about to give him and asked God for a sign.

Gideon's response to God may look familiar to many of us when we are asked to take on something beyond our confidence level. Let's look at this next passage.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. When was a time that you felt deeply inadequate?
2. Who did Gideon fear the most?
3. What do you fear the most?
4. Why does Gideon object to being chosen?
5. What is the significance of the altar Gideon built (vv. 23-32)?
6. How do you account for Gideon's newfound courage and name-change? Where does he still lack courage?
7. When have you resorted to using "Gideon's fleece"? What happened?
8. Gideon built an altar and tore one down. What would you like to tear down in your life if you could? And what would you like to build up to the glory of God?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, we know that you have already won the battle and are victorious. We pray that you continue to invest in us, give us courage and confidence to know we are in your hand of protection and there is nothing to fear. Let us courageously follow you and be obedient to all that you have called us to do.

# God Wants Your Weakness

## *Judges 7:1-22* (Gideon)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

God raised up Gideon, a prophet, to answer the Israelites cry for help after, once again, they did evil in His eyes. Gideon was fearful of the Midianites, and even his own father's household, because of their worship of Baal and Asherah pole. He asked for a sign from God - not once, but twice. Let's see how Gideon responds to God's instruction and what results follow.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What dream still sticks in your mind? What's so bothersome or motivational about that dream?
2. Why did God want to reduce the size of Gideon's army? Why send the others home when they might be useful later?
3. What was going through Gideon's mind when God told him he had too many men?
4. What appears to be the qualifications for this army?
5. In your life, when has God used one of your weaknesses or failures to help someone else?
6. Which weakness of yours does this story prompt you to see differently today?
7. Where are you feeling outnumbered or needing God's immediate intervention?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we know that you are the source of righteousness and power. We can do nothing on our own that is of value to you and your kingdom. Search us to use our weaknesses as a way to change us and work through us to your honor and glory

# The Weakness of Strength

*Judges 16:4-22*  
(Samson)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

After Gideon's death, many Judges led Israel for years and began to do evil in the Lord's eyes, so God delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. Sampson was raised by God and had many victories over the Philistines. He was captured, but escaped when the Spirit of God came upon him in power. Unfortunately, his journey would end of leading to his downfall. Let's see how Samson handles his great strength after God provides for his escape.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What was Samson's fatal flaw in this account?
2. Do you think Samson knew the consequences of giving in? Please explain.
3. What was Delilah's most effective strategy for Samson's downfall?
4. What could Samson expect to gain by sharing his secret?
5. What was the worst thing that happened to Samson?
6. When do you feel weakest against temptation?
7. What keeps you from trading in your "secret" to the Delilah in your life?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, you are the source of our great strength and have given us the full measure of your Spirit through your Son Jesus. Guide us each day, in the strength of your Spirit, to guide us with humble and obedient hearts to change us for your purposes and not ours.

# Praying in Pain

## 1 Samuel 1:1-28

(Hannah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

For many years, Hannah has suffered with the lonely pain of infertility in a culture where a woman's value is measured by her ability to bear children. From her experience, we are able to learn valuable lessons in how to pray in the midst of pain.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What has brought you the most joy over these past few years? Most grief? What brought you relief?
2. What are some of the physical, emotional and spiritual effects of this ordeal on Hannah (vv. 7-8).
3. Why do you think God allows Hannah, and sometimes us, to reach such a point of despair?
4. How and why does Eli the priest respond to Hannah's intense prayer (vv. 12-14)? How does he later serve as a channel of God's comfort and blessing to her (vv. 15-18)? Have you had someone in your life during an intense circumstance who served as a comfort and blessing to you? Please explain.
5. What unchanging situation have you grieved over as Hannah does? Was it really unchangeable?
6. What crises and stresses are causing you to pray in pain at this time?
7. When has the Lord "remembered you" in a time of great need? Has there been a time when you suddenly remembered the Lord?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Lord, thank you for the reminder that you hear each one of our prayers and you do answer each of them in your timing, in your way and in your plan. We pray that you help us see the things that are important to you and that our will and desires do not cause us to miss the blessings that you have already planned for us.

# Hearing God's Voice

## 1 Samuel 3:1-21

(Samuel)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

In the days of Samuel, few people were listening to God's voice. Israel was a mess politically and spiritually as they "had no king" and "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:25).

In this situation, Samuel enters, a young man who hears the word of the Lord for the first time and begins his prophetic ministry.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. In what ways does God speak to us today?
2. Why do you think Samuel has difficulty discerning God's voice from Eli's (vv. 4-8)?
3. How does Samuel's openness to hear from God compare with yours?
4. How do you know when you're just hearing the Word of God and not receiving the Word of God?
5. When are you most tempted to hide God's word from others?
6. How does Samuel's obedience affect his relationship to God and his future ministry (vv. 19-21)?
7. What is the greatest obstacle that prevents you from hearing God's voice?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, we praise you that you will never leave us or turn away from us. Let us learn from Samuel and hear your voice. Let us have a relationship with you that allows you to speak into our hearts. We hunger for the sound of your voice and want to be obedient to you.

# Doing Most of God's Will

## 1 Samuel 15:1-35

(Saul)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Saul is king and is instructed to fight and destroy the Amalekites, but he gave in to his men's wishes and did only part of God's command. Let's see how Saul partnership with God changes through this victory.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Who are the people you looked up to as a child – those you loved being seen with?
2. Why do you think we often settle for doing only part of God's will?
3. What factors contributed to Saul's unwillingness to carry out God's explicit command (vv. 12, 24, 30)?
4. Why do you think God equates disobedience with idolatry (vv. 22-23)?
5. What "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" do we sometimes offer to compensate for our lack of obedience?
6. What is one area where you have been content to do almost all of God's will? What steps should you take to complete your obedience to God?
7. Who plays Samuel in your life today – instructing you in the ways of the Lord, rebuking you when you come up short, crying out with God's compassion for you?
8. When does God's grief move you to grieve?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, we know that we can't thwart any of your plans, however, we can remove ourselves for the many blessings you have planned for us and through us. Change our hearts to be more like yours; that your thoughts and plans will be our thoughts and plans. That we will become more and more useful to you because we hear you and are sold out to be obedient to your holy word.

# Facing Your Giants

1 Samuel 17:1-54

(David)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

David was brought to Saul, as a servant, to relieve him from the evil spirits' torment by playing his harp. David began to play a much larger role in fighting a much larger battle. Let's see how David's faith helps him face his giant.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. How do you feel when someone casts doubt on your ability to do something?
2. Why were the Israelites helpless against Goliath?
3. What does Goliath's armor and weaponry reveal about him?
4. What motivated David to fight Goliath?
5. Why did David refuse to wear armor?
6. What giants are drawn up against you in battle? How are they taunting you? Is your attitude more like Saul's or David's? How does that attitude need to change?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, you know who our giants are and the grips they have on us. We praise you that you are the God with no limits. You have promised us victory over our giants in life. Give us the courage, wisdom and strength to face each one of them with you. Strengthen our faith that we might stand against our giants and be a testimony and light to those that are around us in a way that you would be glorified.



# Loving Your Enemy

1 Samuel 24:1-22

(David)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

It's difficult to love those who have hurt us deeply. Saul slandered and falsely accused David. He hated and feared David because God had anointed David to become king in his place (1 Sam. 16:1-13), In order to protect his power and position, Saul kept trying to kill David. In this chapter, we observe David's response to Saul who pursues him with a passion to kill him.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What person, type of person, do you find difficult to love?
2. If you were in David's position, why might you have been tempted to follow the counsel of your men?
3. How can viewing our enemy from God's perspective enable us to have a change of heart like David?
4. Describe the powerful effect David's attitude and actions had on Saul (vv. 16-21).
5. Identify one or two people who might be considered your enemies. What practical steps can you take to serve as a channel of God's love to the person(s) you have identified?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we praise you as the one and only judge. Justice is yours and you must judge both the righteous and the wicked because of your divine nature. Give us the heart of patience and humility to forgive those that pursue us for evil and to not judge their actions. Let this passage teach us to not return evil with evil, but ask for you to change us in practical ways so we can respond in a Godly way that is honoring to you.

# Amazing Grace

## 2 Samuel 9:1-13

(Mephibosheth)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Mephibosheth is the son of Jonathon and the grandson of Saul (first king of Israel). He is orphaned at age five, severely injured in an unfortunate accident, and left crippled in both feet for the rest of his life. Now, the new king on the throne, David, wants to find him. Why? Mephibosheth thinks it's the end, but it turns out to be just the beginning. Let's see what we can learn from Mephibosheth response to when he finds out David is looking for him.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions: Heart**

1. What are some things that scare you the most in life?
2. What are ways we tend to stereotype people in life?
3. How can you see your story in the story of Mephibosheth? In what ways are you like Mephibosheth as you stand before God's throne?
4. When have you received God's kindness as "a friend of a friend"? To whom can you be that kind of friend this week?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Thank you for your provisions of nourishment and protection each day. We pray for your wisdom and discernment to see people as you see them, both wise and evil. We pray that our hearts do not get hardened by our past experiences, but remain open for your full access to teach and encourage us for your great works.

# Praying with God's Values

## 1 Kings 3:4-28 (Solomon)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

David passed away and passed the throne to his son Solomon. He charged Solomon to follow the Lord's commands and decrees. Once the Kingdom was secure under Solomon's rule, he petitioned God's help with a heart that pleased him and we see God respond in a remarkable way. Let's see what the most powerful man on the planet prayers for as he takes the reins of the Kingdom of Israel.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. If God said you could ask for one thing and He would give it to you, what would you ask Him for?
2. Why did Solomon want wisdom more than anything else?
3. What is wisdom? How is it different from knowledge?
4. Why did Solomon get involved in a dispute between two prostitutes?
5. Why did all of Israel attribute Solomon's verdict to godly wisdom?
6. Where do you need God's wisdom the most these days?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Lord, you know us better than we know ourselves. You know every thought and motive of our heart because you created us. Thanks for counting us worthy to worship and serve you. We pray that you continue to change our hearts to be centered on your kingdom. Teach us your ways and give us your works that will produce eternal values for your kingdom.

# Faithless in Love

## 1 Kings 10:23-11:13

(Solomon)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Solomon continued to prosper and become not only the richest of all the kings but became well known and sought after for his wisdom. He clearly had it all as the Lord's hand was with him. Let's see what we can learn from this passage of how Solomon's wealth and wisdom affected his leadership and those around him.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What was Solomon's basic weakness?
2. How did Solomon apply his wisdom to his love life?
3. What weakness hurts your relationship with God? With others? With health and long life?
4. How did Solomon slip away from God as he got older?
5. How do you know when you're beginning to drift from God?
6. What gods divide your attention today?
7. What's wrong with 90% devotion to God and 10% devotion to modern idols?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, this passage reminds us that you are the Creator and all that Was, Is, and Is to Be. It is yours to give and to take away. Lord, help us have pure and clean hearts as we learn how to be good stewards of all that you have given us. Give us a community and spiritual relationships that keeps us focused and accountable on all of the amazing blessings and gifts that you have given to each us.

# Experiencing God's Power

1 Kings 18:16-45

(Elijah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Israel has abandoned the living God for another god, named Baal, and the 450 prophets who serve him. Facing enormous odds, Elijah challenges Baal and his prophets to a contest with the true and living God. Elijah was faced with one of these, and it was going to require a level of strength that went well beyond his own.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. How would you feel if every Christian you know abandoned the faith and you had to stand alone in your commitment to Jesus? Please explain.
2. In what ways are you, or the people around you, wavering between two gods?
3. What are the conditions of the contest on Mount Carmel (vv. 22-26)?
4. Why was Ahab willing to risk a confrontation at Mount Carmel?
5. Why did the people say nothing when Elijah challenged them?
6. What do Elijah's actions indicate about his knowledge of God's reality and power (vv. 30-37)?
7. What is one thing that convinces you that God is more powerful than anything else in your life?
8. What are your "Mount Carmel" situations in which you face overwhelming odds today? In what ways do you see God's power and reality questioned or challenged there?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

You are the One True God. We stand on you and pray for your strength to stand firm in our faith and make the choice to put you first. Let our stand be a testimony to others as your light shines through us during the most difficult of circumstances.

# The Still Small Voice

1 Kings 19:1-19  
(Elijah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Elijah had destroyed the prophets of Baal and fled to Horeb in fear for his life. Elijah felt alone, exhausted, and at one point asked God to take his life because he did not feel worthy to continue on. God was not done with Elijah, even though it looked like Elijah was done with God. Let's see what we can learn from this passage.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Are you ever silent enough to hear God's quiet voice? When?
2. Why did Elijah run away from Jezebel? Why is he suddenly afraid?
3. What moved Elijah to ask God to take his life?
4. Why doesn't God take Elijah's life?
5. While lying under the tree, what did Elijah need most?
6. What was God saying through the wind, earthquake, fire, and whisper?
7. What is the most difficult thing for you to handle after you've had a spiritual, mountain-top experience?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, we are thankful that you never give up on us. We pray that you continue to encourage each one of us through your Spirit in ways to show us you are present and working in our lives. Let us also pray that, as a group, we can encourage your faithful people who are diligently working for your good yet sometimes feel alone. Let us help them know that you will never abandon us.

# Following God's law

## 2 Kings 23:1-25

(Josiah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Josiah was eight years old when he became king. The two previous kings did evil in the eyes of the Lord; however, Josiah did what was right and walked in all the ways of his father David. The Book of the Law was found in the temple and Josiah is preparing to reveal this covenant to all of Judah and Jerusalem. Let's see how God deals with the people that have turned from Him and how he uses Josiah to renew his relationship with them.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Why did Josiah read the entire Book of the Covenant?
2. When Josiah and the people renewed the covenant, what were they committing themselves to do?
3. How had the Israelites compromised their faith?
4. Why were the people willing to give up their idolatry?
5. Why did Josiah destroy everything having to do with other gods?
6. What is one idol that is hard for you to let go?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we praise you as the source of all wisdom and thank you for revealing all that we need in your Word. Lord, let us covenant it and seek it as the authority in our Life. Give us the discipline to be in your Word each day in order for your Spirit to change us from the inside out to be more like your Son, Jesus.

# True Generosity

## 1 Chronicles 29:10-20

(David)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

King David was a man after God's heart. Towards the end of his reign, he completed the temple plans and dedicated all of his personal treasures and wealth to its construction. King David and the people all rejoiced about the people's response to also give freely and wholeheartedly. David is praising God in this prayer for the amazing generosity. Listen to David's prayer of thanksgiving and let's talk about what we learn from it.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Who is one person who modeled generosity for you when you were young?
2. As David nears retirement, what things are uppermost on his mind? What fears may lurk behind those priorities?
3. How does David view God?
4. What aspects of this prayer are useful to God's people today? What parts seem outdated?
5. How closely does David's prayer follow the script you might use in a retirement speech? How would you say it differently when your "days on earth are like a shadow"?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Heavenly Father, you are so gracious and generous beyond measure with each one of us. Thank you for reminding us in this passage that we can't give anything away that was not given to us first by you. We pray that our hearts are moved to not only be good stewards of what you have given us, but generous in giving back to you what is needed to accomplish your work in your kingdom.



# Unsuccessful Success

## 2 Chronicles 26

(Uzziah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The 10<sup>th</sup> king down the line from Rehoboam was Uzziah (also known as Azariah-2 Kings 14:21) who reigned 52 years. He took the throne as a teenager and for many years sustained an impressive reign. His first years were those of fantastic success; the last years were those of tragic failure. Think about the events in this passage and how each of us might be able to relate to it from some point in time of our life.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What do you feel passionately about?
2. Who contributes to Uzziah's success and why? What are Uzziah's accomplishments (vv. 8-15)? Which one stands out to you as the headliner for this king's resume?
3. What is true success?
4. Is there a formula for being successful? If so, what is it? If not, why?
5. How do you deal with those ungodly people around you who seem outwardly successful?
6. How does success test us?
7. Do you see God's mercy in the story? Please explain.

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Lord, we praise you and thank you for the battle you have fought and won for our freedom and bondage of sin. We know that we will be victorious when we pursue and remain in your will. Nothing can stand against us.

# Tried and True

*Job 1:1-22*

*(Job)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

This passage introduces one of God's faithful servants, Job. In many ways, we can see the character of God through him. Job's faith is tested beyond a level that most of us have experienced. The story of Job is given to us to help us learn. Let's see what real trouble looks like in the story of Job.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What is so unusual about the opening scene of this story?
2. Who are the major characters and how are they depicted?
3. What in Job's response strikes you as most extraordinary? What impressed you about Job? How would you have responded to similar circumstances?
4. Why did God allow Job to be tested by Satan?
5. What exactly was the test?
6. If you were to lose everything in one week, what would be your biggest question?
7. When was the last time your faith was seriously tested? Please explain.

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Praise God for strength and perseverance he gives us. We pray that we seek your Word, Lord, for the wisdom and discernment to persevere in time of challenge and heartache.

# The Fear of God

## Isaiah 6:1-8

(Isaiah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

The prophet Isaiah was God's special messenger to Judah, Israel, and surrounding nations to tell them to repent of their sins. He also fills them with the hope of God's future blessings through His promised Messiah. Let's look through Isaiah's eyes as he describes something amazing in this passage and then discuss how he responds.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. What does Isaiah see?
2. What makes Isaiah despair for his life and confess his sin? Why?
3. What happens after Isaiah is touched on the lips by one of the seraphs?
4. How is this response different from his initial response of despair?
5. How is your experience like Isaiah's?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, you are the God of mercy and forgiveness. You are the one True God. We are broken by sin and can only be justified, sanctified and glorified by you. Let's take a moment to be silent in prayer for each of us to talk with God and ask his forgiveness for things that are separating us from his fellowship, love and care.

# Tempted to Compromise

*Daniel 1:1-21*

*(Daniel)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Daniel is forcibly exiled to Babylon and is offered a prestigious education in the best school in the country. But there is a problem. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, ~~however~~, requires a small compromise. This passage introduces Daniel and his training in Babylon.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. In what ways are we pressured to conform to our surrounding culture?
2. In what small ways are we tempted to compromise our lifestyle or beliefs?
3. What does Daniel propose? How does it creatively solve the problem? How is his proposal an expression of his trust in God?
4. In what situations might people ask you to compromise your convictions or beliefs without realizing it? (e.g., How about coming over for a drink?) What creative alternatives might you propose?
5. In what ways does God honor the trust and obedience of the young men (vv. 15-20)?
6. In what ways does our obedience in the "little things" have far-reaching implications in our service to Jesus?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, your nature does not allow compromise. You are righteous, just, loving and merciful without limits. Help strengthen us through your Word and the help of your Holy Spirit to remain faithful to your decrees. Your plans and desires for us are for our good. Let us trust that your way is the best way and not to compromise or seek short cuts that we feel is better or easier.

# Staying Cool Under Fire

*Daniel 3:13-30*

*(Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold that was ninety feet high and nine feet wide. He proclaimed that at the sound of the horn and music, every man and people of every nation must fall down and worship the image of gold or immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused. The King was furious with rage. Let's see how the King responds to these three men and the outcome of his choices.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Why did Nebuchadnezzar insist that everyone worship the image of gold?
2. How would you describe Nebuchadnezzar?
3. Where is the most difficult place for you to maintain your identity as a Christian?
4. If someone were to write about my adventures of faith in Christ, the title would be...?
5. How much are you willing to risk in order to obey a clear commandment of God?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we thank you that you are faithful to us and have given us the example of your Servant Daniel to help teach us to be faithful to you. We pray that we will remain faithful and trust in you no matter what our situation is or what is the cost.

# Taming Lions

*Daniel 6:1-22*

*(Daniel)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Daniel is moved into an administrator position under King Darius. His fellow administrators, however, don't like his exceptional qualities and the king's favor toward him and begin to plot against him. A trap is set for Daniel by his fellow administrators with no apparent way out. Let's see what happens.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. When have you felt really good about something you did, only to have someone else be jealous or unhappy?
2. What stirred up the jealousy of the administrators and the satraps?
3. What stirs up your jealousy?
4. When in your life have you experienced God in the midst of a lion's den?
5. How has God proved to be your lifeline?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Dear God, you are the God of protection and comfort. We pray that you give us wisdom, discernment and protection against those that have ill intentions towards us. Protect us from the evil one and help us to shine your light on those around us, even those that intend harm for us. Let our actions and words be a testimony that would glorify you.

# Running From God

*Jonah 1:1-17*

*(Jonah)*

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

Jonah was a reluctant prophet who was given a mission by God. Instead of following God's command, however, he chose to run away from God. Jonah had his own reasons for running from God's will. His experience challenges us to view our tendency to run away from God in light of God's character. We can often be reluctant to do God's will. At times we can attempt to ignore God and hope He goes away. When he doesn't, we may even try to run from Him.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. Why are you sometimes reluctant to do God's will?
2. When have you run away or been tempted to run from God?
3. What does Jonah's disobedience teach us about the nature of sin?
4. In what ways does God get your attention when you run away from Him?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

Father, we praise you that you are the God of mercy and love. You call us to you and give us your works, not because you need us, but because you want us to learn and grow in obedience like your Son Jesus. We are never out of your sight or care. We ask for your mercy and forgiveness for our stubborn and disobedient nature.

# Mad at God

## *Jonah 4*

(Jonah)

**Review Last week's Story: (2-3 Minutes)** Helps transition the group into scripture.

1. What was one thing you remember about last week's story?
2. What comments were particularly meaningful to you?

**Transition to this week's Story: (2 Minutes)**

In spite of Jonah's defiance, he fulfilled the mission that God had given him, but he was far from happy about the outcome. He did not share God's concern for the people of Nineveh. In this passage, God uses Jonah's anger to teach him about His limitless love and mercy.

**Tell the Story: (3-4 Minutes)**

*Tell the story:* as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.

**Rebuild: (5-6 Minutes)** Chronologically rebuild the story asking questions. If necessary, have the group look for what may have been added or left out. Stay focused on the main characters, locations and events.

**Basic Questions:**

1. What is one thing that struck you or was new to you from this passage?
2. Is there anything you disliked or confuses you about this passage? Please explain.
3. What does this passage teach you about God?(Jesus, Holy Spirit)
4. What does this passage teach you about people?

**Other Application Questions:**

1. As a child, how did you respond when things didn't go your way? Do you still "pout"? Why? How else do you express anger?
2. Why is Jonah depressed and angry now?
3. What does God provide Jonah? Why?
4. When have you been angry at God?
5. How would you end this dangling story? Please explain.
6. When have you tried limiting God's mercy and grace to others?
7. To whom is God wanting you to show mercy?

**Life Application Question(s):**

1. How is God asking you, us, to respond to this passage?
2. What has God put on your heart to do with this passage?

**Prayer Thoughts:**

God, you are Love and Mercy. Thank you for teaching us that you are without limits. We pray that we will respond to you without reluctance or without putting limits on you by our own understandings or feelings, because you have put no limits on your mercy for each of us.



# Year End Review Leaders Guide

## Purpose:

To help group members recognize the personal growth they have experienced in their relationship with Christ and with each other as a group.

## Facilitators Notes/Suggestions

- *You might handout the following questions the prior week so group members can come better prepared to share their answers.*

## Discussion Questions:

### Curriculum Review

1. What was one of the most meaningful passages for you this past year? Why?
2. What is one way you have been surprised by this study of passages?
3. What is one theme that you are walking away with from this past study of God's Word?
4. What is one area that you have grown the most in as a result of this study?
5. How do you feel you are better equipped to share the Word of God with others?
6. What is one thing that God has put on your heart as a result of this past year's study?

### Life Group Experiences Review

1. What is one way you have been surprised about your Life Group experience this past year?
2. What is one way you have personally grown this past year as a result of our Life Group?
3. What have been your biggest challenges this past year and what influence has our Life Group had on it for you?
4. What things have you appreciated most about being together this past year?
5. How would you describe a Life Group to someone who has never experienced it before?
6. Is there any group member's contribution that has been particularly meaningful to you? Who, What and Why?
7. What are some of the ways you would like to grow this coming year? Why?
8. Who do you know that we could be praying for this year to join us or another Life Group?
9. What would you like to see our Life Group become this coming year? Why?

## Prayer Thoughts:

- You can ask a group member to begin accumulating both individual and group prayer requests from the discussion.
- You can pray as each request surfaces from the discussion time.
- Prayers can be written down and sent out later to remind each member of what they are committing to individually and the group.
- Pray for the Leadership of your Life Group, the development of new leaders to branch and fill the needs of our growing biblical community.

## **We are thankful for...**

- The instruction book that God has written for us for life.
- The personal and loving relationship he has pursued with each of us through Jesus.
- The personal relationships we have developed together as a Life Group.
- The prayers and encouragement that has been so meaningful this past year.
- You fill in the rest!

# Communion Guide

## *Tips, Suggestions and References*

### What we believe

- Communion (or the Lord's Super) is an *expression* of our faith in Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior. We believe it is a *symbol* of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross and is to be done in *remembrance* of Him. The key is found in the phrase: "do this in remembrance of Me" (Lk.22:19; 1 Cor.11:24-25).

### Why do we value the Lord's Supper?

- The Lord Jesus placed a supreme value upon it (Matt 26:26-29, Mk. 14:22-25, Lk. 22:17-20)
- The Early church highly regarded it (Acts 2:42,46; 20:7, 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

### What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper?

- A special time of remembering what Jesus has done for us. It is His body and blood which are remembered in the Lord's supper.
  - Remember the Past: What He did on the cross.
  - Remember the Present: Our current relationship with Him.(1 Cor. 10:16-17)
  - Remember the Future: His promised return.(Lk.22:16)
- A time of thanksgiving (The Lord Jesus took the bread, and "having given thanks, He broke it...")
- A time of fellowship with other believers. Reminder of the unity we have in Jesus Christ.

### Who should take part in the Lord's Supper?

- Assembled believers in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 11:27-32)
- It is to believers whose hearts are prepared before the Lord (1 Cor. 11:20-22, 27)
- Ask yourself:
  - Is there any unconfessed sin in my life?
  - Do I need to restore any broken relationships in my life?
  - Do I need to recommit myself to the Lord?

### Resources:

- Bread (A form of flat cracker by its nature represents the sinless body of Christ)
- Cup (Grape juice)
  - Special cups are not required. Any variety or size of cups can be used. Small 1 ½ oz. cups can be purchased at many local stores: Dollar Store, Christian Book Stores, etc.

### General Group Flow

- Open with a short devotional.
  - The What and Why of Communion, or,
  - Passages leading up to the Last Super.
- Prayer of thanksgiving for the bread.
- Read the Scripture verse
  - Take the bread together.
- Prayer of thanksgiving for the cup.
- Read the Scripture verse
  - Take the cup together.
- Close in Prayer