



GUIDE

LEADERSHIP GUIDE

THE BLUE YEAR



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For more information contact:
Perimeter Church
9500 Medlock Bridge Road
Johns Creek, GA 30097.
678.405.2000

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1

GOSPEL LIVING 1

1

Glory – Why We Embrace Christ

ASSIGNMENTS

- Encourage your JG members to go online each week for important resources.
- Continue working on your *Spiritual Journey So Far*.
- Read Part 1, The Story of Glory, in *The Answer*, by Randy Pope.
- Listen to the *Why Pray?* MP3.
- Complete *Semester 1 Spiritual Assessment* and hand in to your group leader.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week.
- Share your own Spiritual Journey. Recruit 3rd year members to share their journey next week.

DISCUSSIONS

- Discuss spiritual accountability. Try to help your JG understand and value accountability. They may have anxiety about being asked direct questions. Try to reassure them that discussions are confidential and tend toward encouragement, not shame.
- Discuss “Why Pray?.” Help your JG understand the purpose and power of prayer of developing a daily habit of prayer.
- Discuss section 1 of *The Answer*. Ask the JG if they’ve ever thought about Glory this way before. Ask if it affected the way they think about relating to Christ. Ask someone to share something they may have journaled in the Accountability section.
- Discuss some of the equipping questions. Ask your JG to share any thoughts or questions they may have written down. Ask them what they learned about Christ from John 1 & Colossians 1. Share one of two of your own insights. Try to model enthusiasm about reading God’s Word for those who are new to the Bible. Help them see the Bible as an accessible and understandable book.

- Introduce the concept of missional living and the purpose of life-on-life missional discipleship – to develop mature and equipped followers of Christ for the lost world. Note what Jesus’ mission is – to make the gospel known to all people through word (sharing the gospel) and deed (demonstrating the gospel). The purpose of the Mission section of *The Journey* is to help transform **TRUTH, EQUIPPING, ACCOUNTABILITY** and **SUPPLICATION** into a missional life.
- Give your Journey Group an idea of how the Mission section will progress during the year.

1

GOSPEL LIVING 2

2

Glory – How We Embrace Christ

ASSIGNMENTS

- If not completed, JG members should continue working on their *Spiritual Journey So Far*.
- *21 Days of Personal Worship*
- Listen to the *God's Honor* MP3.
- Complete *Semester 1 Spiritual Assessment* and hand in to your group leader.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week. JG members should memorize either option a or b.
- 3rd year members share their spiritual journey. Recruit 2nd year members for next week.
- **Model the PRAISE outline for personal worship and the 5 Targets of Prayer using Matthew 7:24-27.** The goal of this unit is to teach JG members how to embrace Christ in daily personal worship. A specific plan is given in order to help those who haven't yet developed this spiritual habit. As the focus of your JG meeting, you will model a 20-minute personal worship experience using the **PRAISE** outline for Bible study and the **5 Targets of Prayer**. It is important that you model the outline exactly for the sake of those JG members who do not have a devotional habit. Model it as if you were really having your personal worship time (except that you should read, think, and pray out loud), rather than "teaching" them how to do it. Afterward, you can discuss any questions that arise, provide coaching, and offer encouragement. Emphasize that you want your group members to succeed in forming this spiritual habit.
- For next week, recruit a 3rd year member to model a 20-minute personal worship experience again, just as outlined, using another passage from the Gospels.
- **Introduce the 21 Day Personal Worship Journal.** This Journal, based on **PRAISE** and the
- **5 Targets of Prayer**, is available with this week's lesson on the curriculum webpage. Some members may need your guidance in choosing a Bible reading plan. You can encourage those who don't have an established Bible study plan to use the **IN BIBLE** study passages each week.
- The goal of the **21 Day Personal Worship Journal** is to help your JG establish the habit of daily personal worship. Randy likes to make a game of this exercise to motivate people. The goal is to create some fun and friendly competition without being legalistic.

Here are the rules:

1. JG members get to declare a "skip" day at the beginning. It can be any day of the week, but it has to be consistent and it shouldn't change. Some might choose the day their JG meets, or Sunday due to services. The skip day doesn't count toward the 21 days.
2. Each week JG members tell the JG what day they're on. (e.g. "day 19")
3. If someone misses a day they have to start over at day 1.
4. The goal is that everyone would complete 21 days before the holiday break.

DISCUSSIONS

- Probe the group's current thinking on prayer.
Try to uncover any misconceptions about prayer.
- Explore and explain the **PRAISE** outline for personal worship and the **5 Targets of Prayer**. Your goal should be to make it seem simple and motivate your JG members to begin personal worship.
- Discuss one of two of the equipping questions.
- Provide time for accountability questions.
- Discuss what it means to live a missional life starting with this definition:
A missional life is one that is motivated by the gospel to take up Jesus' mission. You might also use the baseball analogy in your discussion.

1

GOSPEL LIVING 3

3

Grace – Why We Embrace the Cross

ASSIGNMENTS

- If not completed, JG members should finish working on *My Spiritual Journey So Far*.
- *21 Days of Personal Worship*
- Listen to the *God's Kingdom* MP3.
- Read Part 2, The Story of Grace, in *The Answer*, by Randy Pope.
- Complete *Semester 1 Spiritual Assessment* and hand into your group leader.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week.
- 2nd year members share their spiritual journey. Recruit 1st year members for next week.
- Apprentice or 3rd year member will model a 20-minute time of personal worship using **PRAISE** and the **5 Targets of Prayer**. Recruit a 2nd year member for next week.
- Optional: break into smaller groups so 3rd year members can coach 1st years in personal worship.
- Talk about progress in 21 days of personal worship.

DISCUSSIONS

- Discuss the **Do and Done Diagrams** and the **Great Swap** (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Discuss we lost it all, He did it all, we get it all, vs. we lost a lot, He did a lot, we get a lot. Goal should be to make sure JG members understand and are relying on grace.
- Discuss one of two of the equipping questions.
- Provide time for accountability questions.
- Discuss the three common characteristics of people who live missionally. Ask one of two of your JG members to share the needs where they live, work and play that concern them.

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GOSPEL LIVING 4

4

Grace – How We Embrace the Cross

ASSIGNMENTS

- Listen to the audio message *God's Provision*
- *21 Days of Personal Worship*
- Complete *My Spiritual Journey So Far* by this week

EXERCISES

- 1st year members share their spiritual journey.
- 2nd year member will model a 20-minute time of personal worship. Recruit another 2nd or 3rd year member for next week.
- Optional: break into smaller groups so 3rd year members can coach 1st years in personal worship.
- Talk about progress in 21 days of personal worship.

DISCUSSIONS

- JG Members may have written questions regarding the **TRUTH** section this week.
- Discuss how the spiritual reality of a believer's union with Christ relates to our spiritual responsibility to be filled with the spirit. Make sure the JG clearly understands that their union with Christ through the Spirit empowers them to struggle against sin. Also point out that the struggle is won by surrendering control to the Holy Spirit. Talk about "Spiritual Breathing".
- Discuss one of two of the equipping questions, and provide time for accountability questions
- Discuss the motivation for missional living – the gospel. The gospel itself is the motivation for missional living. It creates in us Christ's compassion for the least and lost. Discuss how one may grow in developing a missional heart.

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GOSPEL LIVING 5

5

Truth – Why We Embrace the Word

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read Part III, The Story of Truth in *The Answer*, by Randy Pope *
- *21 Days of Personal Worship*
- Listen to two audio messages: *God's Forgiveness* and *Know, Consider, Present (Walking in the Spirit)*
- Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section first as early as possible each week.
- **MISSION** – JG members will have committed extended time in prayer for someone on their target list with the goal of formulating a plan to reach them for Christ. JG leaders will need to review these plans and help JG members revise them if necessary. You can do this as a group, or in smaller teams of two or three people. You will also need to encourage JG members to carry out their plan, trusting God for opportunities and fruit.
- Review memory verse of the week.

EXERCISES

- 1st year members share their spiritual journey.
- 2nd or 3rd year member will model a 20-minute time of personal worship.
- Optional: break into smaller groups so 3rd year members can coach 1st years in personal worship.
- Talk about progress in **21 Days of Personal Worship**.

DISCUSSIONS

- For those who want to investigate a biblical response to Evolution you can recommend:
 - Behe, Michael J., *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*
 - Colson, Chuck, *How Now Shall We Live?*
 - Johnson, Phillip E., *Darwin on Trial*
 - Strobel, Lee, *The Case for a Creator*
 - or they can **visit www.answersingenesis.org**

- Discuss what Jesus meant by, “abide in [continue to follow] My word.” Make sure the JG doesn’t confuse this with performing for God to earn His love.
- Discuss the implications of John 14:6 (the 3rd **IN BIBLE** question). Some possible implications are:
 - Then... no one can be saved outside of Christ.
 - Then... it is wise to be a devoted follower of Christ.
 - Then... other religions are false paths to heaven.
- Discuss one of two of the equipping questions, and provide time for accountability questions.
- Discuss how a Spirit-filled life is connected to living missionally.

1

GOSPEL LIVING 6

6

Truth – How We Embrace the Word

ASSIGNMENTS

- *21 Days of Personal Worship*
- Listen to the audio message *God's Power*

EXERCISES

- Any group member who hasn't yet shared their spiritual journey should do so this week. Follow up by asking group members what they learned or what they valued about this exercise.
- Recruit a 1st year member to model a 20-minute time of personal worship using **PRAISE** for next week.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – discuss the importance of being a personal witness. Some important points to cover from the **IN BIBLE** questions are:
 - The Great Commission applies to all Christians.
 - Discuss the two questions from 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. Help your JG develop a biblical definition of the gospel. Also discuss Paul's motivation for being an ambassador of the gospel. Any of the following contribute to his motivation: the controlling love of Christ (5:14); the sense of godly obligation (5:15. Note: be careful to differentiate this from a performance mentality); his conviction of the transforming power of the gospel (5:16-17); and the experience of his own reconciliation to God (5:18).
- **MISSION** – discuss living a missional life across the street, track and ocean. Help everyone understand how the Spirit leads believers to cross every kind of barrier to Christ's mission.

2

GRACE COMMITMENTS

1

The Local Church, Part 1: A Needed Authority for Kingdom People

ASSIGNMENTS

- Check JG member's progress on *21 Days of Worship*. If struggling, encourage them to start over with goal of getting 21 days straight before the holiday break.
- **TRUTH** – Your JG should read the online PDF resource, “*Why Church Membership?*”
- **EQUIPPING** – During this series your JG will memorize the books of the New Testament. A memory aid called “Learning the Books of the New Testament” is included at the end of this week's material. The goal is to have each member of your JG recite the books of the New Testament from memory by the fourth and final week of this series. During your first meeting, you should begin recruiting volunteers to recite them during your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th meetings.
- **MISSION** – Create a prayer list of people or groups to whom your JG members would like to make the gospel known through word and deed.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **Truth** section.
- 1st year member models a 20-minute time of personal worship using **PRAISE**. This is the last week that the Leader's Guide will suggest modeling personal worship. However, anytime you feel it is needed, feel free to use this as a teaching tool to encourage your JG to develop this crucial spiritual discipline.
- Review the “Learning the Books of the New Testament” illustration and the “foundation” (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts).

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The material this week introduced your JG to the notion that the local church is a visible manifestation of God's invisible kingdom. As such, God has entrusted the “keys” of the kingdom to the spiritual leadership of the church. This means that the spiritual leaders of local churches are entrusted with authority to open and close the door of the

kingdom to those who would claim entry. This may well be a controversial concept for some in your JG. Many Christians today hold the view that individuals hold sole authority to declare whether they are Christians or not. However, Jesus' teaching on the keys shows that the church actually holds this authority. So the question is not just, "Do I say I am a Christian?" We must also ask, "Does my church say I am a Christian?" The way a local church says, "Yes", is by entering into a covenant relationship with an individual, receiving him or her as a member of the local covenant community. When discussing this material at your group meeting, you should focus on these points:

- The kingdom that Jesus brought is the reign of God over His people. God's kingdom (in this age) is not measured by its geographic extent, but by its expanding influence in the hearts of ever increasing numbers of people from every ethnic group around the world.
 - The coming of this kingdom is good news because outside the rule of the just and merciful King, there could be no salvation. Therefore, the gospel Jesus preached is the gospel of the coming kingdom of God.
 - The local church is the visible community through which people enter the invisible kingdom. It has been given custodial authority over the kingdom. It declares who is, and who is not, a member of the kingdom by embracing people as members of the church, or by withholding membership.
 - Church membership is an important step in one's personal spiritual journey that should not be neglected. Submission to local church leadership is a sign of one's submission to God's Kingdom reign.
- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions with your group in order to clarify these points. Don't feel that you must discuss them all. Here are some tips that may help you:
 - **MATTHEW 13:31-33** – The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven teach similar truths about God's kingdom. Both parables describe the kingdom as beginning in a small, even hidden way, but growing over time. The parable of the mustard seed particularly teaches that God kingdom grows of its own power and meets the spiritual needs of those who find shelter and rest in it. The parable of the leaven teaches that God's kingdom grows in influence by infiltrating its surroundings. It does this by winning the hearts of people from every language, ethnic group, national descent and philosophical or political persuasion.
 - **MATTHEW 16:13-19** – This passage teaches that custodial authority over the kingdom is given by Jesus to His church, as represented by His disciples. In spiritual matters, He would recognize their authority to open and close the doors of the kingdom to those who would claim entry. You may want to point out that by giving the keys (a symbol of authority) to all His disciples, Jesus is demonstrating that single authority over the church belongs only to Him. No other human being can faithfully bear the responsibility and safely exercise authority over the church alone. Therefore, no one Pope, Bishop, Pastor or Elder should be viewed as holding the keys alone.

- **MATTHEW 18:15-18** – You may want to note that Jesus is teaching how the church should wield its authority in the exercise of discipline of its members. The important point to make here is that authority is wielded with a redemptive focus. This teaching assumes that the offended person has truly been harmed or wronged in some way, but even so, excluding a member from the church is a last resort. To use modern legal terms, the “plaintiff” should first approach the “defendant” who has wronged him or her in an effort to bring reconciliation privately. If the defendant stubbornly refuses to make the situation right, then the plaintiff should bring one or two witnesses (people who are familiar with the facts of the situation). If the defendant still refuses to repent and recompense the plaintiff, then the church elders should be involved. If the defendant is still unrepentant, then s/he should be excluded from the church and sacraments. This amounts to treating that person as a non-Christian, since his or her lack of repentance is a strong evidence of being an unbeliever. (Though, only God knows if this person is truly a Christian.) Verse 18 shows that their judgment will bear heaven’s endorsement because they act as those possessing the keys of the kingdom.
- **ACTS 14:19-23** – Paul was eager to appoint elders in churches who would bear the keys in each local congregation. Without this delegated authority these churches would be adrift spiritually. Their effectiveness as a spiritual home for God’s people and mission to their communities would be seriously limited.
- **HEBREWS 13:17** – This verse teaches that church leaders serve under Christ’s authority to whom they must give account for the benefit of the church. In order for church members to benefit from their leaders’ service they must submit to it.
- **EQUIPPING** – Allow adequate time for a good discussion of these questions. Your goal is to help your JG members face any resistance they may have to the idea of submitting to church authority and to see that this is in conflict with a willingness to submit to God’s kingdom.
- **MISSION** – Discuss prayer lists. Ask a few people to share why certain people are on their list.

2

GRACE COMMITMENTS 2

2

The Local Church, Part 2: A Safe Home for Kingdom People

ASSIGNMENTS

- Check JG member's progress on 21 days of personal worship. If struggling, encourage them to start over with goal of getting 21 days straight before the holiday break.
- **EQUIPPING** – Continue memorizing the books of the New Testament. Review the illustration and the "left column" (Pauline Letters).
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section early in the week. Their assignment this week is to have a conversation with someone on their prayer list in order to gain insight into their needs and look for opportunities to make the gospel known through deed.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- By now, everyone should have had an opportunity to share their spiritual journey and model a 20-minute time of personal worship using **PRAISE**. If not, you should make a phone call to anyone in your JG who needs an opportunity to complete these exercises. Don't let anyone miss the benefit of doing this in the JG setting.
- A few people may be ready to recite the books of the New Testament. Continue recruiting people to recite in the next two meetings.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The material this week emphasizes that God intends the local church to function as a safe home away from home for kingdom people. When discussing this function of the local church, focus on these points:
 - The local church should function as a home away from home for God's people (the home embassy analogy).

- The spiritual benefits of belonging to the local church are receiving instruction and support in being an ambassador, training/equipping in specific ministries, and accountability for spiritual growth.
 - The responsibilities of members of the local church are to love one another and to grow spiritually.
 - Discuss the difference between members and guests of the local church. Are regular attenders more like members or guests?
- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions with your group in order to clarify these points. Here are some tips that may help you:
 - **1 PETER 1:22-2:5, 9** – Peter reminds these Christians of the all important command to love one another. Keep in mind that the love Peter has in mind has as much or more to do with how they treat one another than how they feel toward one another. Christ loved people through active demonstration, not mere feelings. The experience of being born again through the living word of God, the gospel, enables them (and obligates them) to obey this command.

The command in 2:1 is a more specific instruction on how to love one another. The command in 2:2 to crave the spiritual milk (a reference to God’s word) is a command to continue in the means of grace that results in spiritual growth. This makes sense since it was that word of truth that brought about spiritual life in the first place. Peter’s purpose is to encourage his audience to pursue those things that will result in their spiritual growth, because God’s overall purpose is to build a spiritual house of worship, a people who offer their lives and hearts as spiritual sacrifices of worship.
 - **HEBREWS 10:24-25** – The writer is encouraging his readers to love one another and regularly meet together. Note that the stated purpose of their meeting together is for encouragement and motivational accountability (“...*stir up one another...*”).

-
- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss either or both of these questions. One focuses on the value of membership in a local church. The other gives your JG members an opportunity to discuss any issues they may be experiencing with love and/or forgiveness.
 - **MISSION** – Allow time for people to share their experience talking with people on their prayer lists.

2

GRACE COMMITMENTS 3

3

The Local Church, Part 3: A Mission to Non-Kingdom People

ASSIGNMENTS

- Check JG member's progress on 21 days of personal worship. Ask if anyone has gone past 21 days yet.
- **EQUIPPING** – Continue memorizing the books of the New Testament. Review the illustration and the "roof" (Pastoral Letters).
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section early in the week. Their assignment this week is to have a conversation with a second person on their prayer list in order to gain insight into their needs and look for opportunities to make the gospel known through deed.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- You should have a few people recruited to recite the books of the New Testament for this meeting. Continue recruiting so that everyone in your JG has recited the books of the New Testament by the end of this section of *The Journey*.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The material this week emphasizes that God intends the local church to function as a mission to non-kingdom people. When discussing the local church's missional function, Randy wants you to emphasize these points:
 - Every believer is also an ambassador called to participate in the church's mission to non-kingdom people. Challenge your JG to discuss any intellectual or emotional objections to this. But, you don't want your JG to lapse into a performance mentality regarding this. Encourage any objectors in your JG to surrender their hearts to God and ask Him to make them willing ambassadors.

- An effective mission to non-kingdom people must be committed to providing answers to the painful questions and real-life needs of the least and lost. A truly missional church will never separate the spiritual and social aspects of the gospel. See Matthew 25:31-46.
- An effective mission to non-kingdom people must be committed to proactively seeking the least and lost. It will strategize on how to reach the non-kingdom people within its sphere of influence and will equip its members to act on that strategy. See Acts 1:8.
- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions with your group in order to make these points. Here are some tips that may help you:
 - **MATTHEW 25:31-46** – The story of the sheep and goats is challenging because taken alone it sounds very performance oriented. However, don't let your JG forget the larger context of grace throughout Scripture. The sheep's good performance did not earn them acceptance by Jesus. Rather, their works demonstrated that they truly belonged to Him. The goat's unconcern for the practical needs of people around them demonstrated that they had failed to receive and pass on the compassion of the Savior. They failed to meet the obvious needs of those around them. This shows that the mission of the church to the least and lost must always include practical deed ministry.
 - **JOHN 8:1-11** – Somehow, Jesus pricked the consciences of the woman's accusers so that they inwardly knew they were unfit to stand in judgment due to their own sins. Jesus alone is sinless, which qualifies Him to be the perfect Judge, and yet, though He commanded her to leave her sins, He did so while offering forgiveness and mercy. His example shows that as the church pursues its mission, it must not do so from the standpoint of judgment, but of mercy. As Randy says, like one beggar showing another where to find food.
 - **JAMES 1:22-27** – In verses 22-25 James uses the mirror analogy to retell the meaning of the parable of the wise and foolish builders. (See Matthew 7:24-26). In verse 26 he gives an example of "forgetting what one looks like/building a house on sand", followed by positive examples of "remembering what one looks like/building a house on rock in verse 27. This shows that pursuing the practical deed ministry of the church's mission is essential to following Christ's core teachings. It's hard to say one is a follower of Christ if one willingly leaves the vulnerable in need and want.

- **EQUIPPING** – You can use the **IN BIBLE** questions on Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 to challenge your JG about their participation in mission. You can also use the 3rd and 4th Equipping questions to spark some interesting discussion. The key is to help your JG seriously evaluate their personal connection(s) to Christ’s mission. Ask each group member to commit themselves to developing real, on-going connections to mission. This could be in the form of intercessory prayer for the least and lost, being equipped to share their faith, financially supporting those in need or regularly serving those in need. This may also be a good time to lead by example and discuss ways to serve the least and lost in a tangible way.
- **MISSION** – Allow time for people to share their experience talking with people on their prayer lists.

2

GRACE COMMITMENTS 4

4

The Local Church, Part 4: An Equipping Station for Kingdom People

ASSIGNMENTS

- Check JG member's progress on **21 Day Personal Worship**. Celebrate small victories and progress.
- **EQUIPPING** – Continue memorizing the books of the New Testament. Review the illustration and the "right column" (Non-Pauline Letters).
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section early in the week. Their assignment this week is to go on a prayer walk and journal about the experience.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Any remaining JG members should recite the books of the New Testament for this meeting.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The focus this week is on calling your JG to a grace-motivated commitment to their biblical roles and responsibilities in the ministry of your local church. Leaders (staff/elders) should be committed to being leader-equippers. Members should be committed to being ministers (i.e. those who meet needs through service), and attenders should be challenged to become member-ministers. You might open the discussion with a challenging question about who should be responsible in a local church to care for the grieving when a loved one dies, or win the lost through personal evangelism. You may choose to discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions, but don't feel that you must cover each one. Here are some tips that will help you:
 - **EPHESIANS 4:11-16** – This passage clearly delineates the main responsibility of spiritual leaders to *equip*. The original Greek word used here means *to come alongside, to guide*. And contrary to the traditional view of ministry, the *saints* (i.e. the laity) are responsible to do the work of ministry. God's purposes in this is to build up a body of believers that is like Christ in every way – in truth,

in love, in spiritual maturity and unity. For this material you needn't get into a discussion of the various leadership roles Paul mentions. But, do be aware that the roles of *shepherds* (some translations read *pastors*) and *teachers* may be best understood in combination as one role – *pastor-teacher*.

- **HEBREWS 13:17-21** – This passage mirrors Ephesians 4 except that God is pictured here as the master-equipper. The agent of His equipping work is Jesus as you can tell by the phrase “...through Jesus Christ” in verse 21. So then, the power of God to equip His people for ministry is made available through Christ, and manifest in the equipping activities of God-ordained leadership in local congregations. Note that the focus of God’s equipping work in this passage is the glory of Christ, whereas the focus in Ephesians 4 is the spiritual growth of the local church.
- **TRUTH** – The focus this week is on making a grace-motivated commitment to one’s role in the local church. Here are some primary discussion points from Unit 4:
 - Review that the local church is endowed with God’s authority to be the doorway of the kingdom, and is intended to function as a safe home away from home for His people, and as a mission to non-kingdom people.
 - In order to function as a safe home and effective mission, a lot of ministry must get done. Ministry is simply service that meets a need.
 - The biblical model for how ministry gets done (in order for a church to become a safe home and effective mission) is the leader-equipper, member-minister model.
 - Members are the primary ministers in a church, not the spiritual leadership.
 - Spiritual leaders are the primary vision setters, goal setters, and equippers.
- **EQUIPPING** – Use the self-evaluation chart to help launch a discussion of attitudes toward membership, ministry and equipping. The goal of this discussion should be to help your JG members think about where they are, and where they should be in terms of their commitment to the biblical model for ministry.
- **MISSION** – Discuss the prayer walking experience. Ask one of two people to share what they wrote about the experience.

3

KNOWING GOD 1

1

The Sovereignty of God

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Remind your JG of the importance of developing personal worship. Continue to encourage them to use the **21 Day Personal Worship Journal**.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you choose, but don't take time to discuss them all. Ask your JG to share their personal applications of the verses you do discuss. Their personal applications should start with the word "I" – e.g. "I will (with God's help) ..." If they haven't written down personal applications, or if their applications aren't specific and measurable, coach them on doing this. Application is the hardest thing the student of the Bible has to learn. Here are some tips for discussion:
 - **PSALM 29** – To "ascribe" means to *attribute or credit to*. When David says, "Ascribe to the Lord..." he is calling on his hearers to recognize God's sovereign power with worshipful awe. David's intention in this psalm is to inspire awe at God's power as well as trust and confidence that He will give sustaining strength to His people.
 - **PSALM 115:1-13** – Verse 3 teaches that in contrast to tangible, but powerless idols which can do nothing, God is transcendent over creation and does all He purposes. The lesson here is that God has ultimate power and absolute authority to carry out all He desires.
 - **ISAIAH 40:27-31** – Our troubles often work to convince us that God is unaware of our needs, or that He doesn't care. This passage teaches that God has an understanding of our situation that is beyond our own, and He invites us to "wait" for Him and receive His sustaining strength. That is, He calls us to place our needs continually before Him in trusting reliance upon Him to meet our needs.

- **ISAIAH 46:9-11** – No one is like God. Therefore, no one has His authority. His authority is absolute. Verse 10 indicates that all He plans, He accomplishes. His purpose is always fulfilled exactly as He intends. See Job 42:2 for confirmation. Verse 10 also teaches that God’s knowledge extends into the future *because He declares what the future will be*. He knows the past, present and future because He determines all things, not because He gets a “movie preview” of what will happen.
 - **1 TIMOTHY 6:15B-16** – Paul uses phrases like the “*only Sovereign*,” “*King of kings*,” “*Lord of lords*” and “*eternal dominion*” to teach that God’s authority is absolute and unchallenged by any competing power or will. There is no other ultimate authority but God’s.
- **TRUTH** – Review the to summarize section and emphasize these key points:
 - God is omnipotent. He is the source of all power.
 - God is omniscient. He knows all things because he plans/purposes all things.
 - God is sovereign, having absolute authority. He exercises His limitless power and perfect knowledge so that all His will is accomplished.
 - The Scriptures call us to respond to God’s sovereign rule with worship, awe, trust and an attitude of humble reliance.
- **EQUIPPING** – Make sure you plan to spend enough time discussing the equipping questions. Focus on trusting God’s sovereignty. There is a sort of surrender involved in coming to trust someone’s absolute direction of everything that concerns one’s self and the world in general. In fact, the ancient church father, Augustine, once said he hated the doctrine of God’s sovereignty because he feared the possibility of a cosmic tyrant with absolute power. However, after he became a Christian, he wrote that God’s sovereignty had become a most precious doctrine to him because He knew that God could be trusted to do all the good He had promised to His people. Ask your JG members to share their prayers of worship (2nd question) and confession (4th question).
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – During this section of *The Journey* you will organize your JG to participate in a service project in order to demonstrate the gospel. The discipleship and outreach ministries of your church leadership will inform and equip you for leading your group in this project. Try to involve everyone in your JG in a discussion of the mission service project. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to share in the preparation and/or execution of the project. For more info, contact the discipleship ministry at Perimeter Church.

3

KNOWING GOD 2

2

The Spirituality of God

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Your JG should be preparing for the upcoming service project.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you choose, but don't take time to discuss them all. Ask your JG to share their personal applications of the verses you do discuss. Their personal applications should start with the word "I" – e.g. "I will (with God's help) ..." If they haven't written down personal applications, or if their applications aren't specific and measurable, coach them on doing this. Application is the hardest thing the student of the Bible has to learn. Here are some tips for discussion:
 - **GENESIS 28:10-17** – The vision of the ladder signified that Jacob was not alone in the world. God was actively involved in his life carrying out His covenant promises. He was correct in thinking that God was in that place. But, it was not the place that was significant. This was not the "...gate of heaven" (v 17). God was showing Jacob that He would be with Jacob wherever he went.
 - **EXODUS 20:4-6** – The Second Commandments teaches us that God is unlike anything He has created, especially those creatures that have been given physical form. It teaches us that God does not have physical form and that representing Him as such defames His glory.
 - **1 KINGS 8:22-30** – This passage shows us that God fills all His creation, that the Heavens are His dwelling place, and that His own creation cannot contain Him. He did not create in order to have a home. He is greater than creation.
 - **PSALM 139:1-10** – This psalm shows us that God's presence is inescapable. For the believer, this is good news. It means that we are never alone, unguarded, or abandoned.
 - **PROVERBS 15:29** – Even when God "withdraws" His presence, He is still present. Think of it as a withdrawal of His presence to bless. The usual term we use for this is God's withdrawn favor.

- **JEREMIAH 23:23-24 & EPHESIANS 4:6** – You can help your JG visualize transcendence with phrases like, *greater than, ruling over*. But transcendence does not mean that God is a distant, unconcerned Being. He is immanent, that is, He is involved, available, and concerned with the welfare of His creation and people.
- **PSALM 16:11** – God is present to bless
- **AMOS 9:1-4** – God is present to judge
- **COLOSSIANS 1:17** – God is present to sustain
- **HEBREWS 1:3** – God is present to sustain
- **REVELATION 21:3-4** – God is present to bless
- **TRUTH** – Review the **TO SUMMARIZE** section. Make sure your JG understands these logical consequences of the spirituality of God:
 - God is transcendent over His creation. He is not contained or dependent on it.
 - God is omnipresent throughout His creation. His full presence fills all things.
 - God is immanently involved with His creation. His people are not alone.
 - God is invisible to our physical senses unless He manifests Himself in some physical form.
- **EQUIPPING** – This week you might try combining the **EQUIPPING** and **ACCOUNTABILITY** sections. Try dividing into small accountability groups and have each group discuss these questions, and then pray for one another.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Continue planning and discussing your upcoming mission service project. It is vital that you emphasize the purpose of this project as an exercise in developing a missional life. Discuss how your service project can be an opportunity to make the gospel known through deed – a demonstration of Christ’s compassion.

3

KNOWING GOD 3

3

The Immutability of God

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Your JG should be preparing for the upcoming service project.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Entertain any questions your JG may have about the **IN BIBLE** passages. Especially address questions about whether God changes His mind. Help your JG understand how to apply the passages to their own lives using “I will (with God’s help) ...” statements. Here are some tips for discussion:
 - **EXODUS 3:1-15** – God’s name, “I AM”, implies a simple existence that does not evolve with time. Time does not affect God. The phrase, “*I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*”, implies that God is the same God for Moses and Israel as He was for the patriarchs. He was present with Israel fulfilling His unchanging promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - **NUMBERS 23:1-20** – God’s decisions are right and final the first time. No amount of human manipulation can change this fact.
 - **PSALM 33:1-12** – Not only do God’s plans not change, but He is total authority to make human plans change and fail. This passage adds to the teaching of God’s immutability in that it shows that God’s plans *alone* do not change or fail.
 - **JOB 23:1-15** – Job seems certain about God’s unchanging nature and plans, and understands that whatever God is doing, he cannot stop it (v 13). But he doesn’t see the point of his suffering. He doesn’t perceive God’s hand at work in his life (vv 8-9). Job doesn’t know what God knows. He wants to trust God (v 10), but he is struggling. He doesn’t seem to have a full understanding of God’s loving kindness toward him. We see this by reading Job’s story, and we can be comforted in our own trials that God’s unchanging plans for us are motivated by His love. Therefore, our trials will always produce eternal glory and blessing in our lives.
 - **HEBREWS 6:13-19** – God’s truthfulness (He does not lie), and His promise should be enough to convince us that He will not change His good purposes for us.

- **GENESIS 6:5-7; 1 SAM 15:22-35; EXODUS 32:7-14** – These passages do not contradict the teaching of God’s immutability. These, and others like them, should be interpreted as using figurative speech to communicate God’s sorrow over sin and the inevitable judgment that follows. Exodus 32 is challenging because it seems like God is willing to renege on His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However, in light of the clear teaching of God unchanging purposes and will, it seems best to interpret this passage as a test of Moses’ leadership and a demonstration to Moses of God’s anger at sin.
- **TRUTH** – Make sure your JG understands the definition of immutability: *God is unchanging in His person, purposes and promises; and yet He feels emotions and interacts responsively with His creation.* There are no unforeseen events for God, and nothing beyond His control. So, He need never adjust His plans to react to circumstances beyond His control. The unchanging nature of God and His promises brings comfort to His people. He is stable, solid and dependable. We have assurance that He can, and will, accomplish all His good will toward us.
- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss the 1st and 3rd equipping questions. Emphasize that the immutability of God’s promises is a solid reason to put our hope in them.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Continue planning and discussing your upcoming mission service project. It is vital that you emphasize the purpose of this project as an exercise in developing a missional life. Discuss the gospel as the motivation for living a missional life and how that applies to your service project.

4

HEALTHY MARRIAGE 1

1

Male and Female: How God Designed Your Spouse

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Your JG will begin work on the **60-Second Testimony** exercise this week. Over the next 4 weeks each member of your JG will share their **60-Second Testimony**, starting with you, then 3rd year group members and so on. Start recruiting people to share their testimony right away. Try to have only one of two people share per week so that newer people have a chance to observe other examples and hear the coaching that others receive. Some will need an extra opportunity if their testimony is unclear, too long, or doesn't focus on what Christ has done. Help your JG learn to do this well. If you have a small group, there may be time to have JG members share their testimony, receive coaching, revise and present again the following week.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions. Here are some tips:
 - **GENESIS 1:26-28** – This passage teaches the ontological equality of men and women. The man and woman were created equal in value, dignity and glory in that they shared the image of God. They also shared the same responsibility before God to fill the earth and the same authority over the animals.
 - **GENESIS 2:15-24** – This passage teaches that men and women are functionally unique. God intended to find a suitable, or corresponding, partner to share with the man in his responsibilities before God. The woman was taken out of him to show that she corresponds to him and is dependent upon him. The man named her woman, showing that he recognized her perfect correspondence to himself – both her equality and uniqueness.
 - **GALATIANS 3:23-29** – Be aware that this passage does not teach that there is no difference between men and women. It does teach that there is no difference between men and women *in respect to their being a recipient of the promise of grace*. All redeemed people share in the same promise regardless of their gender.

- **1 PETER 3:7** – Peter mentions here that women are physically weaker than their husbands, but are nevertheless equal heirs of grace. Husbands should live with their wives honoring both this difference and this similarity.

- **TRUTH** – The important points you want to drive home are:
 - Men and women are equal in the value of their being.
 - Men and women are functionally unique.
 - The above points are by God’s design; not by accident, the Fall, or cultural influences.
 - Women are designed to correspond to men, that is, they are ontologically equal to men and functionally unique. Thus, men and women were designed by God to complement each other physically, spiritually and emotionally.
 - Women are designed to be helper/supporters to their husbands (this will be explained further next week as “headship” and “submission”).

- **EQUIPPING** – The 3rd equipping question should create an interesting discussion. The goal of this question is to expose any perceived disadvantages of the Scriptural model of male leadership/female support as being due to sin. Help your JG see that the advantages have been designed in by God, whereas any potential disadvantages are created by our own sinfulness.

- **MISSION** – Introduce the **60-Second Testimony** exercise with a question, “If someone asked you why you were a follower of Jesus and you only had one minute to answer, what would you say?” Allow some discussion, and bring out the importance on being able to give an attractive, concise response. Explain how the **60-Second Testimony** exercise will equip your JG to effectively communicate their spiritual journey. Model the **60-Second Testimony** first before any of your group members. You want to inspire your JG to make it their goal to be able to *effectively share their story of becoming a follower of Jesus*.

4

HEALTHY MARRIAGE 2

2

Headship and Submission: How God Designed Marriage

ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – Listen to the audio resource on the subject of a woman's role in the home and the church.
- Your Journey Group should continue to work on their **60-Second Testimonies**.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week.
- 3rd year JG members should share their testimony this week. Engage your JG in conversation about what makes a good and bad testimony. You can break into smaller groups to do some coaching.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The goal this week is to see how God's intended pattern for marriage was corrupted by sin and how Spirit-filled living can renew the possibility of realizing the intended harmony in marriage. This harmony is most likely to be experienced when husbands and wives embrace the biblical model of male headship and female submission in marriage. However, because of male abuses of the past and the resulting rise of the feminist movement, female submission is grossly misunderstood and the very idea may seem repulsive to some in your JG. You may need to carefully frame the discussion by admitting there have been abuses, and ask your JG to focus on what they saw in Scripture rather than what they may have seen in people's lives. You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions that might serve your JG's needs. Here are some tips:
 - **GENESIS 2:15-24** – God created the woman because the man alone was not sufficient to fulfill the commission to fill the earth and rule over it. God brought the woman to the man to present her as a gift to him. The fact that the man named her "woman" is both an indication of his authority role in her life and that he was delighted to see how she so wonderfully corresponded to him. She was his equal, and yet she was unique.
 - **GENESIS 3:16** – Sin and God's curse on sin ruined Adam and Eve's intended harmony in their roles. Marriages would now be marked by male oppression of women in marriage and in cultures generally, and by females grasping for power. The original word for "desire" here means *desire to control or rule*. See Genesis 4:7 for a comparative example.

- EPHESIANS 5:17-33; COLOSSIANS 3:15-19** – The specific parallels between these two Pauline passages are illustrated on a chart in this week’s material. In general, it is significant that Paul’s (and Peter’s) teaching on marital roles is set in the context of spiritual living. This means that following Jesus isn’t just about being a Christian man or woman – a “just me and Jesus” mentality – it’s about being a Christian husband and father, or wife and mother. The Spirit-filled life is lived out in the context of our human relationships. Ultimately, the God-given roles in marriage are intended to reflect the relationship between Christ and His Church. This should impress every husband, wife, and prospective husband and wife with the solemn responsibility of living in marriage so as to reflect the spiritual message God intends to communicate.
 - 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3** – Some have argued that “*head*” here means *fountainhead, source or spring*. But the context denies this possibility. Paul uses the word head 3 times to mean the same thing in each phrase. If he meant *source or spring*, you would translate it as follows, “...*the source of every man is Christ, the source of a wife is her husband, and the source of Christ is God.*” It is possible to understand Christ as the
- source of man, and the first man as the source (in creation) of the first woman. But, how can a husband be the source of his wife? Further, to say that God is the source of Christ contradicts the biblical teaching that the persons of the God-head are co-eternal, and that none is produced by another as its source. Therefore, we must conclude that the most natural interpretation for “*head*” is *authority or leader*. Christ who was equal to His Father in power, substance and glory, nevertheless voluntarily submitted to His authority and came to do the Father’s will, not His own.
- The same meaning for “*head*” should be applied in Ephesians 5:23. A husband is the authority of his wife and she is called upon to submit to him. This does not mean she is not her husband’s equal for even Christ submitted to His equal – The Father.
- 1 PETER 2:13-3:7** – Peter’s command to husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way shows that husbands are never to exploit their wives’ physical weakness or her attitude of submission in order to oppress her. Rather, husbands must treat their wives as equals who are especially worthy of honor.

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- EQUIPPING** – Discuss any of the Equipping questions that may be relevant to your group. Focus on motivating your JG to embrace the teaching and consider it a vital part of their personal spiritual development..
 - ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
 - MISSION** – Be sure to allow adequate time for 3rd year members to share their **60-Second Testimony**.

4

HEALTHY MARRIAGE 3

3

Love: How Husbands Fulfill Their Role in Marriage

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section as early as possible each week.

This week your JG has two mission assignments.

- Continue working on the **60-Second Testimony** exercise.
- Those who are married, or are in a relationship that could potentially lead to marriage, should have a spiritual conversation with their partner. This could be a daunting assignment for some. You will need to encourage them as well as reinforce the importance of developing the spiritual dimension of their relationship. Ask a few people to share their experience.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week.
- 2nd year JG members should share their testimony this week. Remind your JG of the importance of mastering this exercise.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you like. Here are some tips:
 - **MATTHEW 20:20-28** – The wrong use of authority is wielding strength to inspire fear. Husbands can do this with threats, shouting, silence and even body language. The right use of authority is by serving those whom we would have follow us. Servant-leadership will inspire trust and voluntary submission. This directly applies to a husband's role in marriage because he must exercise his God-given authority in a Christ-like way.
 - **EPHESIANS 5:25-33** – Make sure your JG sees the elements of self-sacrifice and purification in Christ's love for the church. You might also ask how they think this applies to a husband's love for his wife. Point out that his love should also be as attentive to his wife's spiritual/physical/emotional welfare as is a man's love for his own body. This type of love certainly would be considered idealistic if not for the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- **1 PETER 3:7** – Help your JG explore what it means to live with one’s wife “*in an understanding way*.” Challenge them to think of both right and wrong examples of how husbands should treat their wives.
- **TRUTH** – This week, the main points you should stress are:
 - Husbands must not exercise their authority in marriage by force or fear.
 - Husbands should follow Christ’s example of exercising authority by servant-leadership. Stress that this is what inspires trust, submission and cooperation.
 - The love that befits a husband’s servant-leadership is an act of self-sacrifice motivated by a desire to benefit her spiritually. This love is a commitment based on the will of God, often supported by emotion. This Christ-like love is the essence of a man’s husbandly duty to his wife. It is how he fulfills his role as head in marriage.
 - Husbands should treat their wives in a way that reflects that they understand and value their unique nature and needs.
 - Husbands and wives should respond to a difficult marriage situation by choosing to offer unconditional love or submission in obedience to God.

-
- **EQUIPPING** – Use the first question to challenge your JG to think more deeply about love as a commitment vs. emotion. Discuss the fourth question to get your JG thinking about exercising authority to inspire trust vs. fear.
 - **ACCOUNTABILITY** – allow time for smaller groups of 2 or 3 to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
 - **MISSION** – Be sure to allow adequate time for 2nd year members to share their **60-Second Testimony** and receive coaching.
 - **MISSION** – Invite a few JG members to share their experience having a spiritual conversation with their spouse (or potential spouse).

4

HEALTHY MARRIAGE 4

4

Respect: How Wives Fulfill Their Role in Marriage

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section first as early as possible each week.

This week your JG has two mission assignments.

- Continue working on the **60-Second Testimony** exercise.
- The second assignment is the same as last week, to have a spiritual conversation with their spouse or accountability partner. The emphasis is to see what your JG members learn about their partner's spiritual life, so be sure to ask some appropriate questions about this.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week.
- 1st year JG members should share their testimony this week.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Review a few of the **IN BIBLE** questions you like. Here are some tips:
 - **EPHESIANS 5:22-24, 33; COLOSSIANS 3:18** – Some in your JG may find it hard to take these verses at face value. You may need to stress the unconditional nature of these instructions, that is, that any obedience that must be rendered “*as to the Lord*”, must be unconditional.
 - **1 PETER 3:1-6** – Peter’s counsel to wives of unbelievers is that they submit to them so that they may be won by their respectful conduct. He also counsels them to focus on the beauty of a gentle demeanor, which will be highly valued by their husbands, and to put their hope in God without giving in to fear.

- **TRUTH** – This week, the main points you should stress are:

- Submission does not imply inferiority, nor give license to husbands to exploit or abuse their wives.
- Wives fulfill their role of submission in marriage by learning to treat their husbands with unconditional respect.
- Wives must learn to hope in God's care rather than fear exploitation if they submit to their husbands in marriage. With God's help a woman can learn how to be obedient to God in her marriage even when her husband has serious character flaws or is an unwise leader.
- Husbands must understand the unique responsibility they have to set the tone for harmony in the marriage. A husband can win his wife's trust and respect, or make her regret that she ever promised it.

- **EQUIPPING** – If you lead a ladies' JG, you may want to allow for an extended discussion of the second equipping question. Some ladies may wish to share their fears/worries. If you sense that any of your ladies are in an abusive situation, make sure you seek the counsel and help of your church's leadership.

All JG leaders can discuss respect as a choice one makes about how to treat someone vs. a feeling. Try to draw a parallel between this and the idea of love being primarily a choice/commitment in action rather an emotion. Discuss how both a husbands' love and a wife's respect can be unconditional.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Be sure to allow adequate time for 1st year members to share their **60-Second Testimony** and receive coaching.
- **MISSION** – Invite a few JG members to share their experience having a spiritual conversation with their spouse (or potential spouse).

5

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 1

1

The Truth About Science & the Bible: Which Truth Should You Believe?

ASSIGNMENTS

- **EQUIPPING** – Your JG should have memorized the books of the Pentateuch. Over the next several weeks your JG will memorize all 39 books of the Old Testament. A memory aid called “Learning the Books of the Old Testament” is included at the end of this week’s material. The goal is to have each member of your JG recite the books of the Old Testament and New Testament from memory. During your first meeting, you should begin scheduling volunteers to recite in about three or four weeks. The ultimate goal is to have every JG member recite all 66 books of the Bible by the end of this section of *The Journey*.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **DEUTERONOMY 10:14; NEHEMIAH 9:6; PSALM 90:1-2; JEREMIAH 10:10; ROMANS 1:19-20** – The facts about God and the universe that these verses teach are summarized in the beginning of the to summarize section of the material. Be sure to allow your JG members to share their responses and conclusions based on these facts.
 - **JOHN 18:33-38** – Jesus’ entire life and ministry indicates that He believed that all truth is absolute and objective since all truth comes from God. Jesus treated His moral and spiritual teachings (“*Truly, truly I tell you...*”) as if they were as objectively true as any mathematical or scientific statement.

- **COLOSSIANS 2:1-9** – The point you want to drive home here is that a biblical worldview is incompatible with many contemporary philosophies. Sometimes, people fall into the deceptive trap of not thinking critically about what they believe and may even hold two contradictory beliefs or values to be true. Use your own examples to illustrate this and challenge your JG to develop a consistent, biblical way of thinking about life.
- **TRUTH** – This week’s material lays the foundation for discussions about creation, evolution and the meaning of life that will happen in the next few units. The goal of this unit is to dethrone science from its position of unchallenged authority – “If it’s science, it must be true” – and to expose the assumption of naturalistic philosophy that masquerades as science when origins are discussed. You will also want to emphasize the truth of Romans 1:20, that simple observation of the natural world (which is what science is supposed to be all about) should lead humanity to acknowledge the eternal power of our Creator. You may need to explain that the reason many people don’t see a Creator behind the creation is that sin has enslaved humanity and blinded our minds and hearts to Him.
- **EQUIPPING** – The goal of these questions is to challenge your JG to bring all of their beliefs, values and life habits into alignment with a biblical worldview beginning with the basic facts about God and His creation. Remind them that a comprehensive, biblical worldview will affect decisions about every area of their lives – marriage, family, professional goals, financial management, standard of living choices, entertainment choices, education, and social and environmental responsibility. Challenge your JG to seek the daily filling of the Holy Spirit (remind them how, refer to Gospel Living, unit 2) and to submit to His leading and to the clear teaching of Scripture.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Discuss how your JG group feels about witnessing. What thoughts come to mind? Make sure to connect witnessing with missional living – making the gospel known through word and deed.

5

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 2

2

Before the Design: There was a Designer

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the mission assignment first each week.
- **EQUIPPING** – Your JG should have memorized the 12 Historical books of the Old Testament. The goal is to have each member of your JG recite the 66 books of the Bible from memory by the final week of this series. You should be recruiting volunteers to recite during future meetings.
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to review *The Answer* again in preparation for the discussions over the next few weeks.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch and Historical books of the Old Testament.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **GENESIS 1:1-2:1** – Discuss any facts your JG observes about God and creation in the first chapter of Genesis. Your JG may have questions about Genesis 1, including whether the 6 days of creation are literal 24 hour periods as we would understand them, or some longer time period. It is the position of this material that Moses had in mind 6 consecutive 24-hour days. However, it should be admitted that this is a matter which Bible-believing Christians debate. Given the limited amount of time you have for your group meeting, don't let your discussion get side-tracked on debatable matters. Focus on the basic facts about God and creation (including the four bullet points listed in the material) because these are crucial to forming a biblical worldview. If your group is interested in pursuing their questions further, you can recommend these resources:
 - **Science and Evolution**, Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, 1999.
 - **Darwin on Trial**, Phillip E. Johnson, 1993.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-8; 2 TIMOTHY 1:8-10; TITUS 1:1-3** – The point here is to see that God’s plan to save His people by grace in Christ was in His mind even before He created anything! The phrase “*before the beginning of time*”/“*before time began*” (NIV) indicates that time, and therefore space, had a definite beginning. This teaches that only God was in existence prior to creation; it is not eternal.
- **TRUTH** – The main points to emphasize this week are:
 - Several scientific discoveries since the early 1900’s confirm the biblical teaching that the universe is not eternal, that it had a specific beginning point.
 - Naturalists resist the obvious implication that the universe could not begin itself and must, therefore, have been created by God.
 - The bare fact that the universe exhibits order amid its complexity argues for intelligent design.
- **EQUIPPING** – The goal this week is to have your JG think about the implications of the fact that God was actively planning to save His people before He created the universe they would live in. The implication is that we are creatures of a loving God who created for no other reason but that His creatures should see and worship His glory. (It’s about Him, not us.) We should respond to Him with loving, submissive devotion, in awe of His kindness.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Discuss bringing Jesus into conversation with people and how *The Answer* can serve as a tool to that end. Discuss the conversation that is illustrated in the material. Get your JG to think about creative ways this can be adapted to suit their personality. Ask them to think about what is hard or easy about this approach.

5

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 3

3

The Facts of Life: Did Darwin Get Them Right?

ASSIGNMENTS

- **EQUIPPING** – Your JG should have memorized the 5 Poetic books of the Old Testament. You should ask one of two people in your group to recite the books they know so far, or to recite the New Testament books again. The goal is to have each member of your JG recite the 66 books of the Bible from memory. By now, you should have everyone in your group scheduled to recite during future meetings.
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to review *The Answer*, and to buy the 4 *Life Issues* booklets. Your JG will read and discuss one *Life Issues* booklet per week starting next week. Bring booklet 1 to your meeting to encourage your group that these are handy, easy-to-read “cliff notes” approaches to helping someone investigate Christianity. Encourage your JG to get these booklets from the bookstore well in advance of your meeting and make sure you have a working familiarity with how these booklets are used in an investigative approach to witnessing.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch, Historical and Poetic books of the Old Testament.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **GENESIS 1:11-13, 20-25** – The phrase, “according to its kind”/“according to their kinds” tells us that God created animals as separate species from the beginning and that He gave them the ability to reproduce their own species. From this we understand that the multitude of unique species did *not* descend from a common ancestor. According to the Bible, living species do not produce new species, but continue to reproduce their own kind exactly as God designed them.

- **PSALM 95:1-7, PSALM 145** – Ultimately, a biblical worldview has to do with how we see ourselves relating to our Creator and living in the world He created. Impress upon your JG that developing a biblical worldview should ultimately lead Christ's followers to genuine worship and glad obedience as his creatures.

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about the origins of life that you'll want to make clear:
 - The naturalistic philosophy of secular science makes it predisposed to embrace Darwinism regardless of the evidence against it.
 - The main evidences required to verify the truth of Darwin's theory on the origin of species (life from non-life, transitional species) have not been observed.
 - Complex structures (such as eyes) cannot evolve bit by bit over time. The thousands of supposed advantageous mutations needed in the evolution of eyes would actually be disadvantageous and would, according to *natural selection*, be eliminated.
 - Species exhibit a natural tendency to maintain a norm, not change over time.
 - The logical consequences of naturalism supported by Darwinism are that there is no God to be worshipped or obeyed; there is no ultimate basis for law and ethics, no inherent value in human life and no life after this world.

- **EQUIPPING** – The **TRUTH** section this week was not able to get into the practical matter of what a holy life really looks like. Your JG members might wonder if it's not about dos and don'ts, what is it about? The Equipping section attempted to get at this with a challenging question. It is recommended that you take advantage of this question and focus much of your group meeting on discussing how holiness is worked out in believer's lives. You may want to discuss how following God's commands, the example and teaching of Christ, and the forming of personal convictions contribute to living a holy life.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.

- **MISSION** – Continue last weeks discussion about using *The Answer* and the *Life Issues* booklets to bring Jesus into conversation with people. Discuss the conversation that is illustrated in the material. Get your JG to think about creative ways this can be adapted to suit their personality. Ask them to think about what is hard or easy about this approach.

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BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 4

4

The Image of God: Why You Are More Than Just a Smart Mammal

ASSIGNMENTS

- **EQUIPPING** – Your JG should have memorized the 5 Major Prophets of the Old Testament. You should ask one of two people in your group to recite the books they know so far, or to recite the New Testament books again. The goal is to have each member of your JG recite the 66 books of the Bible from memory by the end of this section of *The Journey*. By now, you should have everyone in your group scheduled to recite during future meetings.
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG again to review *The Answer*, and to buy the 4 *Life Issues* booklets. Your JG is to read the first *Life Issues* booklet. They should read both the introductory section “Is the Bible God’s Word?”, and answer the questions in the margins of the chapters from the Gospel of John. Listen to audio message *Life Issues Booklet 1 Explanation*.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch, Historical books, Poetic books and Major Prophets of the Old Testament.
- Someone may be ready to recite all 66 books of the Bible by now.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **GENESIS 1:24-31; 2:7-9** – The final, crowning act of God’s creative masterpiece was the creation of human beings. Think of our creation as the finale of a symphony, which ties together the themes of a symphony in dramatic crescendo. Our creation on the sixth day along with land animals reminds us that we are creaturely – made of the stuff of earth. However, several details in the creation texts show that human beings are unique and should not be classified with animals. A list of those unique details can be found on page 5 of this week’s material.

- **GENESIS 5:1,3** – Seth was born in the image and likeness of Adam. This helps us to understand that being made in God’s image means to be His child. Children bear the likeness of their parents. All people bear the likeness and image of their Father God. This reinforces the truth that we were designed to experience God in a parent/child relationship. Without this experience we can never know true significance.
- **GENESIS 9:6** – This verse specifically ties the value of human life to the image of God. The fact that all people, even in their fallen state, bear God’s image is the foundation of human value and dignity. The image of God in human beings makes them of greater value to God than the rest of His creatures. This is why purposefully killing a person is morally evil (murder), but the purposeful killing of an animal for food is not, and cannot be called murder.
- **PSALM 8** – Imagine that in this Psalm David is lying under a star lit sky taking in the magnificence and scope of the heavens. It makes him feel very small and relatively unimportant in the grand scheme of creation. Yet, David remembers the position humanity was given on the 6th day of creation – the blessing of the image of God and the authority to rule God’s creation in service to Him. As he reflects on this, he interprets the meaning of that event as God’s act of crowning human kind with His glory and giving them honor above all His created works. The image of God can be thought of as an infusion of God’s glory in the human spirit. David’s thoughts remind us that humanity, no matter how broken (criminal, pagan, mentally-challenged, impoverished, oppressed), is of greater worth to God than the heavens that seem so magnificent in our eyes.
- **PSALM 139:13-18** – This passage looks at the creation of individuals rather than of the whole race. It offers an intimate portrait of the care and detail with which God designs each person and the life that they will experience. This reminds us of God’s specific love and providential care, not just for us, but for *me*.

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- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about the image of God that you’ll want to make clear:
 - Design creates purpose. Significance is experienced when we fulfill our purpose.
 - The image of God makes humanity God’s most valuable creation to Him.
 - The image of God defines humanity as in a class of their own. God does not classify us as animals.
 - The image of God gives us the capacity to commune with God as His children.
 - The image of God gives us the capacity to receive stewardship over the earth.
 - **EQUIPPING** – Engage your JG in a discussion about believing, and living in light of, the implications of the Bible’s teaching on the image of God. Some may want to confess they have a hard time with some of the implications listing in the material. Others may have questions about what these implications mean for real life.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Continue the discussion of helping people investigate Christianity using the *Life Issues* booklets as a tool for making the gospel known in word. Discuss the question, “Is the Bible God’s Word?” and a few of the questions from the first *Life Issues* booklet.



5

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 5

5

Knowing Your Place in God's World

ASSIGNMENTS

- **EQUIPPING** – This week your JG should have memorized the 12 Minor Prophets. You should ask one of two people in your group to recite the whole Old Testament, or recite the whole New Testament again. Some in your JG may be ready to recite all 66 books of the Bible now. By now, you should have everyone in your group scheduled to recite them during future meetings.
- **MISSION** – This week your JG should have read the second *Life Issues* booklet. They should read both the introductory section, “Do Non-Christians Really Deserve Eternal Punishment?” and answer the questions in the margins of the chapters from the Gospel of John. Listen to audio message *Life Issues Booklet 2 Explanation*.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch, Historical books, Poetic books, Major and Minor Prophets of the Old Testament.
- Include time for one or two JG members to recite all 66 books of the Bible.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **PSALM 8** – This psalm shows us David wrestling with his humanity. What does it mean to be human? Why would God bother with me when He could tend to the grandeur of the heavens? Yet, David understands that though he is physically small and weak, God has crowned human kind (including David) with glory and commissioned them to His service. From this we get the sense that David understood how wonderfully significant he was in God's world. Your JG can also draw the same conclusion. What is true of the whole human race collectively is also true of each individual, no matter their position in life.

- ROMANS 5:5-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31** – The passage in Romans shows us that God highly values people, even in their sinful state. It is reasonable to assume that this is due to His designing us in His image and likeness. You will want to impress your JG that God’s acceptance of them is not based on their performance, but on Christ’s performance. As a result, they are unconditionally accepted and loved by God. The passage in 1 Corinthians reminds us that God does not evaluate our worth in the way that people do. He does not love or find value in people based on their wisdom, authority or nobility. Nor does He find worth in people based on their physical appearance or accomplishments.
- TRUTH** – Here are the main points about developing a healthy self-image that you’ll want to make clear:

 - Our habits of thought influence our emotions and behavior. This is an important principle of spiritual growth that demands that we learn to think rightly about our God, His work and ourselves.
 - Those who mean the most to us (parents, peers, and spouse) will significantly shape the self-assessment of our own worth.
 - To the degree that these people buy into the world’s system of assessing worth (appearance, intellect, achievements/abilities, wealth and influence), to that degree we will struggle to properly assess our personal value.
 - The solution to this problem is to understand and accept God’s assessment of our worth, and to value His acceptance more highly than others’. God’s assessment of our worth is demonstrated by the fact that he crowned us and commissioned us to rule (Psalm 8), and redeemed us with the ultimate payment (Romans 5). Meditating on these truths is the key to conforming our thinking to His, and in so doing, developing a healthy self-image.
- EQUIPPING** – Allow your JG to discuss any of the equipping questions. Help them to see how Scripture applies to their individual stories.
- ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- MISSION** – Continue the discussion of helping people investigate Christianity using the *Life Issues* booklets as a tool for making the gospel known. Discuss the question, “Do Non-Christians Really Deserve Eternal Punishment?” from the second *Life Issues* booklet.

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BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 6

6

The Sanctity of a Life: What the Gospel Says About Human Value

ASSIGNMENTS

- **EQUIPPING** – This week, everyone in your JG should have reviewed all 66 books of the Bible and should be prepared to recite the books of the Bible.
- **MISSION** – This week your JG should have read the third *Life Issues* booklet. They should read both the introductory section, “Is Jesus Christ the Only Way to God?” and answer the questions in the margins of the chapters from the Gospel of John.
- **MISSION** – Listen to audio message *Life Issues Booklet 3 Explanation*.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch, Historical books, Poetic books, Major and Minor Prophets of the Old Testament.
- Include time for one or two JG members to recite all 66 books of the Bible.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **GENESIS 9:6; EXODUS 20:13** – The point of this question is to get your JG thinking creatively about what actions the sixth commandment requires in defense of life. The group of verses in the next question gives the Bible’s explicit teaching on this.

- **DEUTERONOMY 10:17-19, 24:17-22; PSALM 82:1-4; PROVERBS 14:21, 31:8-9; ISAIAH 1:16-17; JEREMIAH 22:1-3; JAMES 1:27** – These passages dictate that God’s people defend and preserve the poor, sick, orphans, widows and aliens (foreigners). These groups of people all survive at the margins of society. They are often at-risk in terms of survival or mistreatment. God’s word specifically commands His people to look after their needs and to ensure that they are treated mercifully and are treated justly in society.
- **PSALM 139:13-16** – This section of Psalm 139 indicates that God knows each person intimately while still in the womb, and has a plan for each life from conception to the grave. This supports the understanding of “personhood” beginning at conception and not at some arbitrary time after birth.
- **LUKE 4:14-21** – The announcement Jesus made here should make us realize that no life is unimportant to God. Jesus’ ministry is the ultimate answers to the question, “How valuable is a life?” It shows that human life has absolute value to God regardless of contribution to society or quality of life. He showed us that every life is worth defending, nurturing and saving. This includes all the at-risk groups mentioned in the Bible plus any marginalized people or groups in any society.

The goal of this question is to challenge your JG to think about how Jesus’ promise of mercy and deliverance applies to the modern issue of the sanctity of life. You also want to challenge your JG to consider their role in applying that message to this issue. Try to encourage your JG to think missionally about bringing hope and mercy to those who are in need. The equipping section will follow up on this theme.

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- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about the sanctity of life that you’ll want to make clear:
 - If there is a God, then there is absolute truth. If there is absolute truth, then there are moral absolutes.
 - The value of a human life is measured by God, not by people. Quality of life and contribution to society are irrelevant to the question of a person’s value.
 - Jesus’ message of mercy and justice applies to the issue of the sanctity of life in that it demonstrates that every person’s life is worth living, nurturing and saving.
 - God’s people are to be conduits of the mercy they have received. Therefore, they should look for opportunities to engage missionally with people who are at the margins of society.
 - **EQUIPPING** – Allow your JG to share how they envision becoming missionally engaged with people who are in need or at the margins of society. Be prepared to guide them away from performance motivation. The point here is not to guilt your JG into activity, but to help them see their opportunity to demonstrate the way God values all people.

Also, as your JG shares what they *could* do to engage missionally with those in need, you will want to challenge them with these two questions:

- Is that something you will actually begin to do?
 - How will that help to make Christ known?
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- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.

 - **MISSION** – Continue the discussion of helping people investigate Christianity using the *Life Issues* booklets as a tool for making the gospel known in word. Discuss the question, “Is Jesus Christ the Only Way to God?”, from the third *Life Issues* booklet.

5

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 7

7

What in the World are You Doing?

ASSIGNMENTS

- **EQUIPPING** – This week, any remaining people in your JG should have reviewed all 66 books of the Bible and should be prepared to recite the books of the Bible in your group meeting.
- **MISSION** – This week your JG should have read the fourth *Life Issues* booklet. They should read both the introductory section, “What is Required to Have Eternal Life?” and answer the questions in the margins of the chapters from the Gospel of John.
- **MISSION** – Listen to audio message “*Life Issues Booklet 4 Explanation.*”

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- Review the Pentateuch, Historical books, Poetic books, Major and Minor Prophets of the Old Testament.
- Include time for one or two JG members to recite all 66 books of the Bible.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **GENESIS 1:26-28** – You could spur your JG’s thinking about this question by reminding them that purpose always dictates design. For example, a hammer is designed with a hard, flat surface that concentrates its weight in a small spot because it is intended to drive nails into wood. God’s purpose for humanity is to preserve and creatively develop the earth for His glory and our enjoyment. He designed us so that we could think creatively and analytically, communicate with one another and commune with Him so that we could fulfill that purpose.

The words, *“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”* implies the development of human civilization and the culture(s) it would encompass. This means that God intended a world full of billions of un-fallen people to develop their language, music, art, science, mathematics, commerce and government under the Lordship of their Creator. The words, *“subdue it and have dominion”* implies that humanity was intended to explore and harness the world’s resources. This means that God intended the human race to discover uses for wood, stone, metals, natural gas, etc.

- **GENESIS 2:5-8, 15** – God created the Garden of Eden to begin showing Adam how he could fulfill his purpose. Adam had all the potential he needed designed into him, but he still needed God to give him some on the job training. The word *“work”* implies that Adam was to tend and develop the garden. The word *“keep/take care of”* means that Adam was to protect and preserve the garden. Some scholars take this as a warning to Adam that the garden needed protection from an enemy as well as an instruction that he was not to waste what God had made.

Adam’s assigned task was similar to God’s work in that it was to be a creative effort. God created the “raw” material, the palette, so to speak. He then commissioned Adam to further the work, allowing him to mirror God’s creative work

and participate in the ordering of the world. Imagine how Adam’s enthusiasm for, and fulfillment in, this task would bring greater glory to God!

- **1 TIMOTHY 4:1-5** – The cultural mandate implies that people would marry (*“be fruitful and multiply”*) and would enjoy the produce of the earth (*“subdue it and have dominion”*) with thanksgiving. To forbid marriage and certain foods (other than those that God forbid in the Law) constitutes a rejection of the Cultural Mandate and treats the world as if it were something evil that must be escaped or avoided. But although the world is fallen and temporarily cursed, it is not evil and God will one day renew its perfection.

The key to a biblical view of living in God’s world is receiving its blessing with thanksgiving to God. He is a gift giver. His gifts should be neither scorned nor taken lightly. Rather, our grateful and adoring attention should be drawn to Him for all the goodness we receive from living in His world.

- **1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19** – The key to explaining these passages about wealth and property is to remind your JG of the basic principles of stewardship. Nothing we own is truly our own. It is entrusted to us. We may enjoy personal property, but our responsibility in stewardship is to use property to be a blessing to others and to bring glory to God. You should also connect Genesis 2:15 to this discussion.

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points you’ll want to make clear:
 - *“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion...”* is the Cultural Mandate. It is the commission to creatively build a God-glorifying human civilization that would extend throughout the world.
 - Adam’s task to work and keep the garden was a training stage for humanity.
 - Work is a gift from God in which we should engage six days a week and pursue excellence according to the ability He gives for His glory.
 - Property is a gift from God which God entrusts for our enjoyment and for the blessing of those around us.
 - That cultures exist is a necessary consequence of the Cultural Mandate. That cultures have many beautiful or noble qualities reflects the image of God in us. But cultures also reflect the sinfulness of the people that populate them. Christians must selectively participate in culture, relying on God’s Spirit and Word to give them discernment about the aspects of their culture they should avoid. They should also seek to be culturally engaged in such a way that they have opportunities to make the gospel known.

- **EQUIPPING** – The equipping questions for this week will take some thought. You have a great opportunity to spark some deep discussions, especially in the third question. Plan on leaving extra time for equipping during this meeting. As always, guide your JG away from any performance mentality thinking if it arises in your discussion.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.

- **MISSION** – This week, conclude your discussion of how to help people investigate Christianity using the *Life Issues* booklets as a tool for making the gospel known in word. Discuss the question, “What is Required to Have Eternal Life?” from the fourth *Life Issues* booklet. Also, discuss how your group member’s attitudes toward witnessing may have changed over the last several weeks. Lead your group in prayer that God would make you all fishers of men.

6

GOD-HONORING PARENTING 1

1

Your Home As A School

ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – Please recommend that parents in your JG read one of these books as an optional reading assignment:
 - *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp.
 - *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, by Paul David Tripp.
 - *Grace Based Parenting*, by Dr. Tim Kimmel.
 - *How Children Raise Parents: The Art of Listening to Your Family*, by Dr. Dan Allender.
 - *Don't Make Me Count to Three*, by Ginger Plowman.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9** – The point you want to make with these verses is that God commands parents to be the primary teachers of their children. Some in your JG may have trouble seeing how (practically speaking) they really can be their children's primary teacher. Loving God with one's whole being is the summary of the Ten Commandments. Parents are to teach their children that which is most important in life, the primary values about God and His truth that they can distill from Scripture. They are to do this through constant teaching and informal conversation.
 - **MATTHEW 23:1-6** – Jesus found fault with the Pharisees for not living consistently with their teaching. The application of this passage to parenting is that parents must live consistently with the values they teach their children. Children become confused and resentful when parents fail to live as they are being taught to live.

- **1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-20** – Paul knew that teaching effectively requires time spent with the student. He viewed this body of believers with a fatherly pride and concern looking forward to the day he could see his well-taught flock with Jesus. Parents can learn from Paul’s spiritual concern for the Thessalonians. They should remember that their children deserve to be the highest priority on their calendar, since seeing one’s children in heaven is a parent’s highest priority.
- **TRUTH** – You will want to focus your discussion on these points:
 - Parents are commissioned by God to be their childrens’ primary teachers.
 - Parents are to use every situation of life itself to teach what really matters to their children using formal teaching sessions, and spontaneous talking sessions.
 - Parents can distill the truth of God’s Word into “bite-size”, significant values. This makes truth relevant, memorable and compelling.
 - Parents need to understand that their lives are a lecture. They need to live in harmony with their values and spend enough time with their kids so they can see those values in action.
 - The two basic rules of parenting are: Love God with all your heart in the presence of your kids, and love your kids with all your heart.
- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG time to discuss their values. Try to guide the discussion so that it is oriented toward biblical value statements that have eternal significance. If someone in your JG can’t describe the eternal significance of a value, it probably doesn’t deserve top-five status.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Remind your JG that the purpose of life-on-life missional discipleship is to develop mature and equipped followers of Christ for the lost world. Remind them that a missional life is one that takes up Christ’s mission to make the gospel known through word and deed across the street, track and world. Review what your JG has learned about being missional this year – missional living, praying, serving, telling and dialoguing. Challenge your JG to now apply what they have learned and engage in a missional life by the power of the Holy Spirit living within them.

Allow the group to discuss the different ways they have been involved in missional living this year. Encourage them to be honest about the obstacles to taking up Christ’s mission that they face and what needs to change in order for them to be more intentionally engaged in mission.

6

GOD-HONORING PARENTING 2

2

Your Home As A Hospital

ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – Please recommend that parents in your JG read one of these books as an optional reading assignment:
 - *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp.
 - *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, by Paul David Tripp.
 - *Grace Based Parenting*, by Dr. Tim Kimmel.
 - *How Children Raise Parents: The Art of Listening to Your Family*, by Dr. Dan Allender.
 - *Don't Make Me Count to Three*, by Ginger Plowman.
- **MISSION** – This week your JG's mission assignment was to think about one person on their prayer lists and evaluate where this person is spiritually. The goal of this assignment is to get your JG thinking and planning specifically to share the gospel with that person. This exercise will encourage each JG member to be taking positive steps to initiate an opportunity to offer *The Answer* and the *Life Issues* booklets to that person. Ask a few of your JG members to share their evaluations during your group meeting.
- Complete *Semester II Spiritual Assessment* and hand in to you.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address, but be sure to allow more time for discussion of the **EQUIPPING** section. Here are some tips that may help:

- **EXODUS 20:1-6** – In this passage, God promises to extend His blessing to the children of the obedient and His curse upon the children of the disobedient. How should this be understood in light of Scripture’s teaching that each person bears responsibility to God for their actions? Is God being unjust? No. God does not unfairly condemn people for their parent’s sin, nor save people because of their parent’s righteousness. However, God’s blessings upon obedient people are experienced by the children within their household. These children grow up, often pursuing the obedience of their parents and experiencing the same blessing on their own households. Likewise, God’s cursing upon the disobedient is experienced by their entire household. Children of these homes often grow up walking in the path of their fathers (to use a biblical phrase) and experience the same troubles and consequences for sin in their own households. This cycle tends to continue unless God shows special mercy to break this generational pattern.

God specifies His jealousy as the reason for this curse. God is not petty. He is not easily angered. He is not motivated by vanity or insecurity. His jealousy is a righteous demand that His people give Him exclusive love and obedience. He will not tolerate competing loves in His people. He requires that their worship be exclusively offered to Him.

Verses 5-6 show that our hearts’ faithfulness to God, or lack of it, can impact our families for generations. If parents want to bring trouble to their children, then all they need to do is live hypocritical lives of moral compromise or spiritual adultery, serving their own pleasures and passions. But if parents want their children to experience blessing, then they will live obediently and walk faithfully with Christ.

- **GALATIANS 5:16-25** – As God’s people live Spirit-filled lives, they will bear the fruit of the divine life – love, joy, peace and so on. Parents who bear increasing fruit of the Spirit are becoming better and better equipped to parent their children as God intends. You may want to discuss again the “how-to” of being filled with the Spirit.

- **TRUTH** – You will want to focus your discussion on these points:
 - Parents are to help heal their children’s hurts and assist them in growing in wholeness.
 - Parents must be available to their children (in terms of time and empathy) to meet their emotional needs.
 - By loving God, parents become a conduit of God’s love to their children. They are also givers of parental tenderness through look, touch and word.
 - The fruit of the Spirit equips parents to do their parenting well. Parents should seek the daily filling of the Spirit as a way to become equipped for their parenting responsibilities.

- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG plenty of time to discuss any of these questions. Some may have painful stories they want to share. Be sure to direct your JG to the great Healer and Forgiver who can redeem and restore any brokenness. Be sure to underscore the practicality of the Spirit-filled life. This is not a promise of instant perfection, but it is a promise of reliable spiritual and moral progress that will equip your JG to face the challenges of parenting.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Invite a few people to share their spiritual evaluation of someone they have been praying for.

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GOD-HONORING PARENTING 3

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Your Home As A Mission

ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – Please recommend that parents in your JG read one of these books as an optional reading assignment:
 - *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp.
 - *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, by Paul David Tripp.
 - *Grace Based Parenting*, by Dr. Tim Kimmel.
 - *How Children Raise Parents: The Art of Listening to Your Family*, by Dr. Dan Allender.
 - *Don't Make Me Count to Three*, by Ginger Plowman.
- **MISSION** – Your JG's mission assignment is to begin a "Mission Activity Log" that will help them keep focused on intentionally engaging in Christ's mission. Their focus should be on the person to whom they plan to make the gospel known. There is a sample log that you should use as a spring board for discussing the purpose of this exercise. You can also brainstorm with your JG about the types of things that could be recorded in the log
- Complete *Semester II Spiritual Assessment*.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address, but give more time to the **EQUIPPING** section. Here are some tips that may help:
 - **MATTHEW 10:34-37; LUKE 9:57-62** – Jesus is not preaching an anti-family message here. He is preaching that His mission takes priority. Try to engage your JG in a discussion of what this means for daily living. Ask your JG if Jesus is calling His followers to deliberately sacrifice their family relationships in the name of His kingdom.

- **MATTHEW 25:31-46** – Jesus identifies Himself as the one who receives service when His followers serve those in need.
- **MARK 10:35-45** – Be sure to point out that the path to greatness, servanthood, is a path that is 180° opposite to that of the world. Ask your JG what our society holds as the true path(s) to greatness.
- **PHILIPPIANS 2:3-8** – Paul wants us to look at Jesus' example of servanthood and learn to look outside ourselves, our needs and interests to the needs and interests of others. He is not saying we are less important than others, but he wants us to treat others *as if* they are more important. This way of viewing ourselves and others is a key part of adopting a missional attitude and pursuing missional living in our homes.

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- **TRUTH** – You will want to focus your discussion on these points:
 - Family maintenance can compete with a missional focus, thus preventing our homes from becoming all God intends them to be.
 - Both singles and married couples should take advantage of the circumstances that allow them to serve others in unique ways. Singles have the advantage of missionary mobility; couples have the advantage of multiple spiritual gifts.
 - Every family member has a God-given responsibility for other peoples' well-being.
 - To serve others is to serve Christ; to neglect others is to neglect Christ.
 - Servanthood is the only path to human greatness.
 - **EQUIPPING** – Spend the majority of your group time discussing ways to apply the principles contained in this material and the obstacles your JG struggles with. It's important for your JG to learn how to massage the truth to make it usable.
 - **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
 - **MISSION** – Invite a few of your JG members to share what they wrote in the Mission Activity Log. Challenge your JG to make at least one entry in their log and be prepared to discuss it during your meetings. You should also challenge them to consider pairing with an accountability partner to track their progress in missional living for the next 30 days. Of course, they will be more inclined to accept this challenge if you lead by example.

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GOD-HONORING PARENTING 4

4

Your Home As A Church

ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – Please recommend that parents in your JG read one of these books as an optional reading assignment:
 - *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, by Tedd Tripp.
 - *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, by Paul David Tripp.
 - *Grace Based Parenting*, by Dr. Tim Kimmel.
 - *How Children Raise Parents: The Art of Listening to Your Family*, by Dr. Dan Allender.
 - *Don't Make Me Count to Three*, by Ginger Plowman.
- **MISSION** – This week your JG's mission assignment was to think about the opportunities they missed to make the gospel known in word or deed. They should also be using the Mission Activity Log to help them become intentionally engaged in Christ's mission. Their focus should be on the person they plan to make the gospel known to.
- Complete *Semester II Spiritual Assessment* and hand in to you.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week and talk about how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions you would like to address. One of the goals of this week's study was to help your JG members think critically about using "the rod" as a means of corrective discipline. The answer key that follows will help you suggest possible interpretations for each of the Proverbs your JG studied this week. Allow your JG to discuss any of the principles of corrective discipline that interest them.

<p>Proverbs 13:34</p>	<p>The wrong motive... <i>hate (a lack of concern for my child's spiritual character)</i> leads to... <i>negligence in corrective discipline</i></p>	<p>The right motive... <i>love (primary concern for my child's spiritual character)</i> leads to... <i>consistent corrective discipline</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 22:15</p>	<p>The problem... <i>The normal state of my child's heart is inclined toward irresponsibility and foolishness</i></p>	<p>The solution... <i>The rod of corrective discipline helps to train my child in the way of the Lord</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 23:13-14</p>	<p>The feared result of using the rod... <i>My child will suffer lifelong physical or emotional injury</i></p>	<p>The actual result of using the rod... <i>Save soul from Sheol (corrective discipline will help guide my child away from unrighteousness that leads to eternal death)</i></p>
<p>Proverbs 29:15</p>	<p>The result of using the rod... <i>My child will gain a heart of wisdom – thinking about God, himself and the world</i></p>	<p>The result of neglecting the rod... <i>My child's lifestyle will bring shame and disgrace to his mother</i></p>

- **PROVERBS 22:6** – This proverb warns that children, left uncorrected in their ways, will develop destructive habits of life and thought that are rarely, if ever, changed as adults.
- **HEBREWS 12:1-11** – This passage teaches that God's purpose in discipline is the development of righteousness and that His motive is love. Therefore, corrective discipline is not contrary to love. In fact, withholding appropriate corrective discipline is a very unloving thing to do because it fails to serve the best interests of an erring child.

- **TRUTH** – Be sure to connect the ideas found in Ephesians 6:4 with the theme of making the home a place of worship with these key points:
 - Parents have a shepherding, or pastoral, role in the lives of their children.
 - A home can only function as a church when children have a healthy relationship with their pastor/parents.
 - A home can only function as a church when children receive the instruction and discipline of the Lord from their pastor/parents.
 - The instruction and discipline of the Lord must be both proactive/preventive and reactive/corrective.
- **EQUIPPING** – Allow adequate time for your JG to discuss any of the equipping questions. Encourage the parents in your group who want to share their successes or failings.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Give your JG sufficient time to talk about missed missional opportunities and use the discussion to encourage your JG to be more intentional about creating and taking advantage of future opportunities. Reinforce the idea that prayer is the key. God will open doors of opportunity as people pray, asking God to use them as His ambassadors.

Invite a few of your JG members to share what they recorded in the Mission Activity Log as a way to encourage others to make use of this tool. Consider discussing your availability during the summer months to meet with your JG members for coaching, encouragement and accountability.

A 28-WEEK GOSPEL-CENTERED
RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLESHIP

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