



GUIDE

# LEADERSHIP GUIDE

THE RED YEAR



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# LEADERSHIP GUIDE

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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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year members share their spiritual journey. Recruit 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year members share their spiritual journey. Recruit 1<sup>st</sup> year members for next week.
- Apprentice or 3<sup>rd</sup> year member will model a 20-minute time of personal worship using **PRAISE** and the **5 Targets of Prayer**. Recruit a 2<sup>nd</sup> year member for next week.
- Optional: break into smaller groups so 3<sup>rd</sup> year members can coach 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## 1

## 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

- 1<sup>st</sup> year members share their spiritual journey.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year member will model a 20-minute time of personal worship.  
Recruit another 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year member for next week.
- Optional: break into smaller groups so 3<sup>rd</sup> year members can coach 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## 1

## 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

- 1<sup>st</sup> year members share their spiritual journey.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year member will model a 20-minute time of personal worship.
- Optional: break into smaller groups so 3<sup>rd</sup> year members can coach 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://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 3<sup>rd</sup> **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

## 1

## The Lord's Day, Part 1: The One Day in Seven Pattern of Life

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Review the memory verse of the week.
- 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.
- **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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> 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

- 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Lord's Day will be addressed in unit 1 and 2 of this series. Unit 1 will deal with foundational principles established in the Old Testament concerning the Lord's Day. Unit 2 will deal with practical applications based on several New Testament passages. Your JG will have lots of questions about the proper way for Christians to observe the Sabbath in our culture. But you might consider asking your JG to hold those questions until they have completed unit 2, since unit 2 will directly address these practical matters.

Try to reinforce these main points from Unit 1:

- God established a 6 day/1 day pattern of life at Creation by setting the seventh day apart as a holy day.
  - God reinforced this pattern of life by instituting the Sabbath command to keep the seventh day holy.
  - The meaning of the word Sabbath is to *rest/to cease* when applied to physical activity. When applied to spiritual and intellectual life it means to *reflect, evaluate, or interpret*.
  - The purpose of the Sabbath command was and is to bring humanity into a weekly encounter with God so that people will see the purpose of their life and work in light of their Creator (Exodus 20) and Redeemer (Deuteronomy 5).
  - People can respond to the one day in seven by continuing to work, stopping for physical rest or recreation, or making worship and spiritual reflection a priority. The latter is God's design for the Sabbath.
- **TRUTH** – you can discuss any of these in Bible questions:
- **GENESIS 2:2** – God *finished* His work (His work was perfect/complete). God *rested* from His work (He stopped. Creation was complete. Nothing was left lacking in Creation.)
  - **GENESIS 2:3** – When God blesses something, He is declaring His favor upon it. When He makes something *holy*, He is declaring that it uniquely belongs to Him. For example, in the Old Testament, although all the nations belong to God, He made Israel to belong to Him as a unique, holy people.
  - **EXODUS 20:8** – To keep the Sabbath day *holy* means that it must be treated differently as a unique day unto itself. By setting it apart as a unique day, we are responding appropriately to God's declaration that the Sabbath is holy.
- **EQUIPPING** – The equipping questions are designed to get your JG to do some critical thinking and self-examination of their current lifestyles in relation to the Sabbath. They are not intended to elicit any right way/wrong way judgments about how to observe the Sabbath. Encourage your JG to share their thoughts by avoiding all criticism. Remember, next week you will be able to address the specifics of Sabbath observance more directly. The ultimate goal of the two units is to instill a grace-base motivation to keep the Lord's Day while avoiding drifting into legalism.
- **MISSION** – Discuss prayer lists. Ask a few people to share why certain people are on their list.

## 2

## GRACE COMMITMENTS 2

## 2

## The Lord's Day, Part 2: A Sabbath Made For Man

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Review memory verse of the week.
- 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

- 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 focus this week is on making a grace-motivated commitment to observing the Lord's Day. You want to guide your JG toward understanding what a real commitment to this law would mean for their lives while helping them avoid the errors of legalism. The unit includes a brief discussion of the difference between obedience to law and legalism. You may have to discuss this further with your group to equip them with a practical understanding.

Your group may have many questions about what is “ok” or “not ok” on the Lord’s Day. Your answers should reinforce the general lines of a grace commitment to the Lord’s Day (i.e. replacing work with spiritual reflection and worship), while encouraging them to submit their consciences (and thus, their choices about the Sabbath) to the Lord. Be careful not to bind their consciences to any human interpretation of the law as the Pharisees did concerning the picking of grain on the Sabbath.

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Try to reinforce these main points from Unit 2:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God intended the Sabbath to be a blessing for humanity.</li> </ul>  | insistence that picking grain on the Sabbath constituted a breaking of the Sabbath).   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is an example of how to respect and observe the Sabbath. His Lordship over the Sabbath indicates that He knows best how to keep the Sabbath.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works of mercy, necessity, and piety are exceptions to the Sabbath.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obedience to the God’s Law is righteous. Legalism is unrighteous. Legalism often takes the form of binding one’s conscience to a manmade law, or to an interpretation of God’s Law. (e.g. The Pharisees’</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite the change to Sunday and the modern pace of life, the Sabbath command still applies to Christians and remains a relevant blessing today.</li> </ul> |
- 

- **EQUIPPING** – The equipping questions are designed to get your JG thinking about the specific decisions they may have to make in order to adopt a lifestyle that is committed to the Lord’s Day. Be sure to use the circle diagram as a focal point of discussion. Also be sure to discuss the different ways your JG members can prepare for the Lord’s Day.
- **MISSION** – Allow time for people to share their experience talking with people on their prayer lists.

## 2

## GRACE COMMITMENTS 3

## 3

## The Sacrament of Baptism

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Review memory verse of the week.
- 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

- 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 defends the view that both believers and their children are legitimate recipients of baptism. This subject may arouse some strong opinions about who should and should not be baptized, especially if your JG members come from a variety of church backgrounds. A good way to approach a potentially heated discussion like this is to respectfully acknowledge the differences between various church traditions, and then humbly, yet confidently, reiterate the view that this material presents.

That is, that believers and their children should both receive the New Covenant sign of baptism because:

- Children of believers were included in the Old Covenant, were heirs of its promises, and also received the sign of the covenant.
- When a child received the sign of the Old Covenant it signified a call to repentance and faith, so as to live up to the terms and promise of the covenant.
- There is no indication in the New Testament that God has changed the pattern He established in the Old Testament.

As you review some of the in Bible questions, be sure to draw attention to the fact that God's covenants with Noah and Abraham (and Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.) always included the representative's descendants. (e.g. *"I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you..."* Genesis 17:7).

You will also want to point out from the story of Jacob's dream of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, that Jacob

was a child of God's Covenant with Abraham and had received the covenant sign (circumcision) as such. Yet, he was a deceiver and did not live up to the faith of Abraham. His life is an example of how the sign signified a *call to faith*. And in fact, we see the beginning of Jacob's saving faith in his response to the dream. We also have the example of Jeremiah relying on the covenant sign of circumcision to signify a call for Israel's true repentance and faith in Jeremiah 4:4.

- **EQUIPPING** – It is important not to let this JG meeting become a theological debate about baptism. The key issue you should focus on is your JG members' grace commitment to baptism. Focus on getting people to share their attitudes about the importance of baptism for themselves and their children. Encourage any who haven't been baptized, or whose children have not been baptized to seek an opportunity to receive that sign soon.
- **MISSION** – Allow time for people to share their experience talking with people on their prayer lists.

## 2

## GRACE COMMITMENTS 4

## 4

## The Sacrament of the Lord's Table

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Review memory verse of the week.
- Check JG member's progress on 21 days of 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

- Any remaining JG members should recite the books of the New Testament for this meeting.

## DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The focus this week is on making a grace-motivated commitment to receiving the Lord's Table as often as opportunity is offered.
  - **EXODUS 12:1-28** – The Passover meal was eaten as the Israelites were dressed and ready for a quick departure. God made this a prominent feature of the Passover meal to give Israel a picture (a memory aid, if you will) that would give them an annual reminder of God's faithfulness to His promise to deliver and the swiftness of His deliverance.

The killing of the Passover Lamb reminded Israel that redemption required a costly sacrifice of the innocent in exchange for the guilty. The Passover Lamb is a typological symbol that foreshadowed Christ, our Passover Lamb (John 1 :29; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

- **1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-32** – The Lord’s Table is a picture that focuses our attention on the cross (past), our current relationship with God and His people (present), and the hope of Christ’s return (future).
- **TRUTH** – The focus this week is on making a grace-motivated commitment to receiving the Lord’s Table as often as opportunity is offered. Here are some primary discussion points from Unit 4:
  - The Lord’s Table was never meant to be optional, nor a drudgery. It is a high privilege. (Consider discussing this point as an introduction to the Equipping discussion.)
  - To rightly receive the Lord’s Table requires self examination.
  - When we receive the Lord’s Table we have an opportunity to:
    - ▶ **Engage the mind** by recalling the cross and the benefits we undeservedly receive.
    - ▶ **Engage the emotions** by reliving the anguish of the cross.
    - ▶ **Engage the will** by recommitting our vows to Christ.
- **EQUIPPING** – Use the self-evaluation question to help launch a discussion of attitudes toward the Lord’s Table. The goal of this section is to help your JG members think about where they are, where they want to be, and what they need to do to get there in terms of their commitment to receiving the Lord’s Table.
- **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 Righteousness 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.

## DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions. Ask your JG to share their personal applications of these verses. 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.
- **TRUTH** – Review the **TO SUMMARIZE** section. Make sure your JG understands this point: In both His nature and His behavior, God is the ultimate standard of what is morally right and good and just. All His will, works, decrees, commands, warnings, judgments, promises, blessings and mercies are necessarily righteous, just, and good.” Then ask your group to discuss what difference this makes in their lives.
- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss any of the equipping questions you wish, but emphasize the practical applications of God’s righteousness – trust in difficulty, hope in the gospel, and gaining assurance of salvation.
- **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 Love 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** – You will want to be aware of these points:
  - You should stress that God's love is not primarily a feeling, nor is it a conditional response to something worthy, noble, or lovely in the object of His love. Instead, God's love is primarily a commitment. It is His determination to show His goodness and bring blessing into the lives of the people He loves.
  - This material makes a biblical case that God places His love especially on His people in a way that He doesn't on the rest of humanity. This perspective may be new and troubling to some of your JG members. Be prepared to reinforce this perspective using the study passages included in the material.
  - Make sure your JG group understands the connection between God's love and the way he demonstrates His love in common grace and special grace. Ephesians 2:1-7 is a great illustration of the connection between God's love and special grace.
- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions. Here are some tips:
  - **DEUTERONOMY 7:6-9** and **JEREMIAH 31:1-7** – illustrate God's special grace toward His Old Covenant people, Israel.
  - **MATTHEW 5:43-48** – illustrates God's common grace toward all people.

- **ROMANS 5:5-8** and **EPHESIANS 2:1-7** – are great illustrations of the connection between God’s love and special grace.
- **ROMANS 5:5-8** – The death of Christ demonstrates God’s love by showing His commitment to bring blessing into the lives of His people while they were unworthy of such love and before they even desired His blessing. This is similar to the love God demonstrated to Israel in the Exodus in that both Israel and Christ’s followers are unworthy recipients of His love. Yet, the crucifixion is a greater demonstration of God’s love in that it was truly costly to God. How amazing that God would bestow such love upon us!
- You will want to discuss the final **IN BIBLE** study question to give your JG an opportunity to talk about common grace and special grace.
- **TRUTH** – You may choose to discuss the chart “God Demonstrates His Love Two Ways”
- **TRUTH** – You may wish to discuss any of these applications of the material found in the final two paragraphs of the **TO SUMMARIZE** section:
  - God’s love for believers who struggle with performance issues.
  - God’s love as a motivator of devotion to Christ.
  - God’s love as a motivator of missional living.
- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss any of the equipping questions you wish.
- **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

## God's Forgiveness

## ASSIGNMENTS

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

## EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week.

## DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You should try to emphasize these points:
  - Forgiveness is an expression of God's love for His people.
  - Spiritual maturity depends on acknowledging the destructive and pervasive nature of sin.
  - Experiencing forgiveness depends on acknowledging the seriousness of one's own sins.
  - God offers forgiveness on the condition of confession/repentance.
  - God offers forgiveness on the basis of Christ's finished work on the cross and His continued advocacy on our behalf. Christ doesn't plead our innocence. He pleads His work as grounds for our acquittal.
  - Unconfessed sin erects a dangerous barrier to one's fellowship with God.
- **TRUTH** – In pursuit of the goal of emphasizing the Holy Spirit's relevance to Christian living, you can discuss the **TO SUMMARIZE** section and any of the **IN BIBLE** questions. Here are some tips:
  - **EXODUS 33:12-34:7** – This passage reveals that God is both merciful and just, and that forgiveness is an expression of His covenant love for His people. Further, 33:19 shows us that He is absolutely sovereign in the administration of His mercy and justice. He is completely free of obligation to show mercy to anyone. God's revelation of Himself to Moses was also designed to impress upon him that God *loves* to show mercy to His people, and yet He does not treat sin lightly. God wants His people to know both the seriousness of sin that makes forgiveness costly, and His delight in showing mercy that makes forgiveness priceless.

- **PSALM 32:1-5** – The third question here is designed to help your JG members begin to apply this passage to their own lives. You could use this question during the accountability time if you wish.
- **LUKE 5:1-11** – In this passage Peter was confronted by Christ's divinity. He became aware of Jesus' sovereignty and holiness, and this made him acutely aware of his own sin. You can illustrate this event with an analogy of shadows cast by the sun. When clouds dim the sun, objects like trees and houses cast dim shadows. But a cloudless sky creates shadows that are revealed in stark contrast. When Jesus unveiled His deity, Peter's sin stood out in stark contrast to His holy light. You should make the point that we, like Peter, are often unaware of how great and serious our sin really is.
- **1 JOHN 1:5-22** – From John's use of the phrase, "*If we claim...*" we can deduce that Gnosticism had spawned three false beliefs:
  1. Habitual breaking of God's law does not break one's fellowship with God.
  2. It is possible to have one's sin nature completely removed.
  3. It is possible to live completely without sinning.
- In response, John emphasized that sin is destructive to one's fellowship with God and universally affects all people without exception. John wanted his readers to understand the seriousness of their own sin so that they would confess them to God and place their hope firmly in Christ alone, their propitiation and advocate. You may want to elaborate on the word "*propitiation*" in 1 John 2:2. Propitiation (translated "*atoning sacrifice*" in the NIV) means a *sacrifice that removes wrath*. The point is that God is angry at sin. He hates it. But Christ our propitiation, fully satisfied God's justice, removing wrath so that we can be at peace with God. (See also Romans 4:25-5:2).
- **EQUIPPING** – The biblical truth about sin and forgiveness may correct the thinking of some of your JG members who either tend to minimize their sin, or minimize God's willingness to forgive. Invite a few people in your JG to share the thoughts they wrote down.
- **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

## Embracing a Spirit of Reconciliation

## ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Your JG will begin work on the **60-Second Testimony** exercise this week (see pp. 10-15). Over the next 4 weeks each member of your JG will share their **60-Second Testimony**, starting with you, then 3<sup>rd</sup> year group members and so on. Start recruiting people to share their testimony right away. Try to have only one or 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:
  - **MATTHEW 7:1-5** – If there's one verse that non-Bible readers know, it's "*judge not...*" This verse is often used as a defense for a guilty conscience, but that was not Jesus' intent. He does not mean for Christians to be undiscerning. Elsewhere he clearly instructs us to discern Christians from non-Christians by the fruit of their lives. He means for us to be non-judgmental, that is, that Christians should understand their own spiritual bankruptcy, and in humility help others to see the same.
  - **MATTHEW 10:34-39 / LUKE 12:49-53** – Help your JG understand that Jesus knows the gospel will cause conflict, but He does not rejoice in that conflict. It is an unavoidable outcome of confronting the world with the truth that Jesus is Lord. When the Kingdom of Heaven is finally consummated in the future, there will be complete peace.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-33** – In this passage, Paul answers the question, “Should a Christian eat meat offered to idols?” Even though we don’t buy meat that has been sacrificed to idols in public markets, Paul’s principles of Christian motives and conscience still apply to our cultural situation. Help your JG understand Paul’s teaching that love is to be the Christian’s primary motive, not concern for one’s personal rights. In addition, you can introduce your JG to the concept of the freedom of the Christian conscience. Christians are free in Christ from the need to perform to earn God’s favor. Yet we must form individual convictions about moral and ethical matters that aren’t specifically addressed in God’s word. In these matters, our consciences are bound to Christ and not to any other person. Therefore, whether you do or don’t participate in a particular activity for conscience sake is not as important as having the proper motive for doing so, nor is it as important as maintaining the freedom of conscience that Christ purchased for you.
- **TRUTH** – Try to help your JG understand the important connection between the example and power of the gospel and their need to embrace a spirit of reconciliation.
- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG members an opportunity to share their prayer for learning to resolve conflict.
- **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

## 10 Rules for Resolving Conflict

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Your Journey Group should continue to work on their **60-Second Testimonies**.

## EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

- Continue focusing on the idea of developing a spirit of reconciliation. Remind your JG of the importance of humility as a key component of this spirit (recall the “log in the eye” from Matthew 7:1-5). This unit introduces another key component of a spirit of reconciliation – the love of God. Help your JG understand that the love in view here is the love of God for “me” that empowers one to give love in turn. The more aware people are of God’s great love for them, the more they are able to offer love, even in conflict.
- **TRUTH** – This unit touches on the issue of physical abuse. You may want to reiterate the message of the unit and encourage your JG members to seek help if this is an issue in their homes. You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions that might serve your JG’s needs.

Here are some tips:

- **EPHESIANS 3:14-21** – The main theme of Paul’s prayer is the love of God. The references to power and strength indicate that the love of God empowers the consequent life transformation that Paul described in chapter 4. This power is at work in Christians empowering them to put off the “old” and put on the “new”, which helps to prevent and resolve conflict. The theme of God’s love which motivates us to imitate God (to live following the example of Christ’s righteous life) is repeated in 5:1-2.

- **EPHESIANS 4:1-3** – Applying Scripture to our lives in specific, measurable ways is difficult and easily overlooked. The intent of this question is to help your JG envision how to apply Scripture to real-life situations.
  - **EPHESIANS: 4:17-24** – Help your JG see the advantages the believer has in the gospel; the assurance of God’s love and favor that trumps performance, the teaching of Christ’s example of a holy life, the opening of our spiritual eyes so that we can perceive spiritual truth, and the power of God’s Spirit working in us so that we can live new lives that follow Christ’s example.
  - **EPHESIANS 4:25-32** – This will be the core passage for the remainder of this series. Allow your JG to talk about living in relationship with others this way. How would this impact the number of conflicts, the seriousness of conflicts, and the ability to resolve conflicts? Also, encourage your JG to talk about a performance vs. grace approach to Paul’s ethical instructions. You could begin with this question, “When Scripture tells us to be and do certain things and not to be and do other things, how do we keep from measuring our “approval” rating by those things?”
- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Equipping questions.
  - **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 3<sup>rd</sup> year members to share their **60-Second Testimony**.

## 4

## HEALTHY MARRIAGE 3

## 3

## 10 Rules for Resolving Conflict

## 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.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year JG members should share their testimony this week. Remind your JG of the importance of mastering this exercise.

## DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Give your JG an opportunity to discuss the “How does this passage apply...?” questions from the in Bible section. You could begin by pointing out that the passages make a logical progression of these ideas:
  - Our words have power to create or minimize conflict. (Proverbs 15:1,2,4)
  - Our words spring from our hearts, revealing its true nature. (Matthew 15:10-20)
  - Our hearts can only manifest righteous words and actions if they abide in Jesus (John 15:1-11).

- **EQUIPPING** – Ask a few of your JG members to share what they wrote about applying the rules for resolving conflict to specific situations in their life. Make sure you reinforce that these “rules” are a way to manifest a spirit of reconciliation.
- **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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

## 10 Rules for Resolving Conflict

## 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.
- **TRUTH** – You may recommend that your JG listen to *God's Forgiveness* MP3.

## EXERCISES

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

## DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – Review a few of the **IN BIBLE** questions.
  - **MATTHEW 5:7** – Merciful people and peacemakers are very similar. The difference is that peacemakers make peace when there is not necessarily an offence against them personally, while merciful people show mercy when there is an offence against them.
  - **MATTHEW 18:15-35** – This teaching of this passage is focused on reconciliation.
 

<p>The first section (vv 15-20) explains how to pursue peace with someone who is reluctant to repent of their offense against you. When that person repents, "...you have won your brother over" (18:15). The second section (vv 21-35) is introduced by Peter's question about the extent of his responsibility to forgive. Jesus' answer in</p>	<p>the parable of the unmerciful servant is that we are responsible to forgive every time an offender repents. This is because of God's greater forgiveness of our offenses against Him. Note that our offenses against Him are greater because He is the perfect, holy, faultless lawgiver.</p>
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- **MARK 11:25 / LUKE 17:3-4** – the point of placing these passages side by side is to make it clear that forgiveness is both an unconditional attitude (*heart forgiveness*), and a conditional action that demonstrates that attitude (*expressed forgiveness*). Expressed forgiveness is offered only on the condition of repentance. However, it is offered repeatedly whenever there is repentance.
- **EQUIPPING** – You may wish to allow for an extended discussion of the equipping section. Allow your JG to discuss any of the equipping questions. Try to get them sharing about:
  - Their personal experience of God’s forgiveness.
  - Their understanding of the difference between heart forgiveness and expressed forgiveness.
  - Their struggles to keep a forgiving heart, and/or express forgiveness in the face of painful personal conflict.
- **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

## Justification &amp; Adoption

## 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 (pp. 12-14). 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*.
- Purchase a copy of the *Life Issues* booklets.

## 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:
  - **GENESIS 18:16-32** – Abraham asked God if He would sweep away the righteous with the wicked. The answer is of course, no. However, Abraham was assuming that there were righteous people living in Sodom, and evidently believed that his nephew Lot was one of them. Abraham reasoned that if there were any righteous people living in Sodom, then God should not destroy the city because it would be unjust of God to condemn the innocent with the guilty.
  - **ROMANS 1:16-17; 3:21-22** – The righteousness of God in these contexts refers to the righteousness that God gives as a gift. The words “revealed” and “manifest” cause us to understand that God is giving what He demands on the condition of faith, despite our failing performance of His law.

- **ROMANS 4:1-8** – Here you see the words “revealed” and “manifest” replaced by the word “credited” or “counted.” This tells us that the righteousness of God is being revealed by being imputed to the credit of the person who believes, which is Abraham in this case. This means that Abraham was credited as having the righteousness of God, despite his shortcoming in righteousness. The righteousness was not his own, yet it was credited as his own. Keep in mind that this does not mean faith is a meritorious work in itself. It does not *earn* God’s righteousness; it is the condition upon which He freely grants it.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 5:21** – The Great Exchange spoken of here is what makes justification a reality for sinful people. God graciously imputes Christ’s righteousness to sinful people, and imputes their sin to Christ when He was crucified. In this way, His death substitutes for our death penalty, and His righteous life substitutes for our unrighteous life, thus satisfying the demands of God’s justice and making it possible for us to be justified.

• **TRUTH** – Discuss these terms with your JG:

- **JUSTIFICATION** – is a declaration that a person has been found righteous. This can only happen for sinful people if God grants the righteousness He demands. He has done this by imputing Christ’s righteousness to us when we place our faith in Him.

The imputation of Christ’s righteousness should be thought of as the basis of justification. Justification is the act of God that gives the gospel power to save sinners.

You may need to clarify the difference between *imputed* righteousness and *infused* righteousness. Imputed righteous is a righteousness that is alien to a person and not their own (i.e., Christ’s righteousness). Nevertheless, it is credited to their account, so that God treats them *as if* it were their own righteousness. Infused righteousness is also alien (i.e., Christ’s), but it becomes a part of a person’s own moral character, so that God can treat them as *actually having* their own righteous. This is an important distinction to make since Roman Catholicism teaches that justification

is based on infused righteousness. Protestant’s agree that sanctification is a process of infusing Christ’s righteousness so that our lives bear the righteous fruit of the Spirit. However, we deny on Scriptural grounds that this is the basis of our justification before God. You may want to use the “Major Views of Justification” diagram to discuss this point.

- **ADOPTION** – is a removal of the hostility and alienation experienced between God and those who are justified. On the basis of justification, people of faith experience peace and harmony with God. Further, He adopts them into His heavenly family, making them true and beloved children so that they can enjoy fellowship with Him and experience His fatherly care. Even further, He makes them all to be His heirs so that they all look forward to the promised inheritance. This is the restoration of immortal bodies that will be clothed in glory and will be able to behold His glory for all eternity.

- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG time to discuss both of these questions. Ask one or two people to share what they wrote to start the discussion and give more time to the second question. As you discuss it help your JG to realize that God's truth must impact the way they live in the world and think about the world.
- **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

## Assurance of Salvation

## 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:
    - **LEVITICUS 26:1-20** – The central promises of this passage are God's promises to live among the Israelites, to be their God, and to embrace them as His people. God offered the exodus from Egypt as proof that He would keep His promise.
    - **JOHN 6:22-40** – Jesus' promises are similar to those in Leviticus 26 because they focus on the fellowship between Him and those who come to Him. Note that Jesus won't cast out those who come to Him, nor will He lose them. This means that He has the power to keep them to the resurrection and eternity. The Father sent the Son to do the work of salvation. The Son obeys the Father in all the work He had given Him to do.
- You could use the 3<sup>rd</sup> question on John 6 to find out where people in your group are basing their assurance of salvation, which would indicate how well they understood and embraced the material in this unit.

- **2 CORINTHIANS 13:1-6** – This passage will also reveal whether your JG members are testing the genuineness of their faith by their past experience or by the present fruitfulness of their lives.
- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about assurance that you'll want to make clear:
  - Biblical assurance is rooted in an unwavering confidence in God's promise to save, and His power to keep, those who belong to Him through Christ.
  - It's less about believing you are saved, and more about believing the One who saves. It's about knowing to whom you belong.
  - Whether or not you belong to Him is revealed by the present fruit of your life, not your past spiritual experiences.
  - The application of the Bible's teaching on assurance brings great comfort to the weak and a strong warning to the disobedient.
- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG time to discuss both of these questions. Ask one or two people to share what they wrote to start the discussion and give more time to the second question. As you discuss it help your JG to realize that God's truth must impact the way they live in the world and think about the world.
- **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

## Sanctification

## 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:
  - **LEVITICUS 20:1-8** – Note that this passage illustrates that sanctification includes the dual concepts of purification and consecration. Purification is the work of God that empowers our moral ability and responsibility to live consecrated lives.
  - **ISAIAH 6:1-8** – This passage illustrates the same principle. Isaiah could play no role in his purification other than the recognition of his sinfulness and repentance that preceded his cleansing. But his purification empowered him to respond to God’s call. His words, “*Here am I. Send me,*” are a shining example of human consecration.

You could use the 3<sup>rd</sup> question on John 6 to find out where people in your group are basing their assurance of salvation, which would indicate how well they understood and embraced the material in this unit.

- **ROMANS 6:15-23** – Point out that the phrase “*slaves to righteousness*” illustrates our obligation to respond to God’s saving and sanctifying work with full consecration.

Both Romans 6 and 12 use the metaphor of presenting one’s body to show that consecration is essentially an act of surrender to God’s will. Be sure to tie this back to what your JG has learned about being filled with the Spirit. (Gospel Living, unit 4).

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about sanctification that you’ll want to make clear:
  - Holiness is the destination we are called to. Sanctification is the path that gets us there.
  - Sanctification is a work of grace that begins when one is justified. A new moral nature is created that progressively empowers Christians to *mortify* sin and bear the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the main agent of this change.
  - Holiness cannot be reduced to a list of moral rules. A morally conservative lifestyle cannot purify the heart. But a purified heart will (and should, and must) manifest itself in holy living.
  - Sanctification involves God’s work to purify the believer’s heart, and the believer’s response of consecrating themselves to holy living.
  - Consecration is essentially a presenting or surrendering of oneself to the Holy Spirit’s control.
- **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.

## 5

## BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 4

## 4

## Glorification

## 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.
- **MISSION** – 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:
  - **JOB 19:23-27** – In verse 26 Job implies that after dying he would continue to have a physical, conscious existence.
  - **DANIEL 12:1-3** – Verse 2 foretells a time of deliverance for God’s people when the dead would rise to be judged. Some would be granted eternal life, while some would be condemned.

- **MATTHEW 22:23-33** – In verse 30 Jesus says that in the resurrection people would not marry because they would be like the angels. You have to ask in what way they would be like the angels? Jesus could mean that they would be non-physical beings as are the angels, but that would contradict clear teaching on the resurrection elsewhere in the Bible. The more consistent interpretation is that people of the resurrection, like the angels, would not have marital relationships.
- **1 CORINTHIANS 15** – This chapter is a lengthy defense of Christ's resurrection and the general resurrection of all people, mentioned in Daniel 12. Paul's defense makes the following points:
  - If Christ is not raised, then Christians have no hope, their faith is vain and they are still in their sins. They would be better off to adopt the philosophy of the hedonists: Eat, drink, and be merry, for there is nothing after death (12-19; 32).
  - If Christ has been raised, then Christians can look forward to being raised in His glorious likeness when He returns to establish His authority, destroy every competing authority and deliver the Kingdom over to God (20-28).
  - The resurrected bodies will be of a different nature than our current bodies, although they will still be physical. Our present bodies are perishable, weak and dishonorable. The resurrected bodies will be imperishable and glorious, bearing the image of Jesus, *"the man of heaven"* (35-49).
  - Christians who are alive when Christ returns will not *"sleep"*, that is, die. Instead, their bodies will be transformed. They will be clothed with new imperishable, immortal bodies.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18** – Paul is willing to endure hardship even unto death because he is encouraged by the promise of glory. He views no suffering as too costly and no accomplishment of greater worth than achieving God's glory because all that is of this world is temporary.
- **PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21** – The prize that Paul is so zealous to achieve (v 14) is being transformed into the glorious likeness of his Savior (v 21). He has his mind set on his heavenly home with Jesus and invites us to share his perspective (v 20), and shun the shameful worldview of those who live for the pleasures of this world (v 19).
- **1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18** – The spirits of those who are dead in Christ will accompany Him when He returns in glory. He will resurrect new bodies for them which will join with their spirits. Then those Christians who are still alive, will not die, but will be instantly transformed and raised to meet Jesus in the air.
- **HEBREWS 11:1-16** – The point of this passage is that these heroes of faith trusted God and believed His promises even though they weren't fulfilled in their lifetimes. They didn't think of this world as their home, but regarded themselves as aliens passing through the world steered toward their eternal destination by the promises of God. This should be the perspective of all Christians, regardless of their rank or experiences in the world.

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about glorification that you’ll want to make clear:
  - Glorification is the completion of God’s gracious redemptive plan. It is all of grace and Christians contribute nothing to it.
  - It is the event when God will cloth His people with immortal, glorious bodies. God never intended humans to exist forever as non-physical beings like the angels.
  - It is the destruction of death, the removal of the curse, the perfection and restoration of glory in God’s people.
  - It is a hope that anchors the suffering soul, warns the wayward, and calls both to live earnestly and faithfully for God’s Kingdom.
  - It is the reward of those who endure to the end, despite their suffering in this world.
- **EQUIPPING** – Invite one of two of your JG members to share how the Bible’s teaching on glorification could be applied to their lives at this time and shape their worldview.
- **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

## The Second Coming of Christ

## ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – encourage your JG to read the supplemental reading material, *The Tribulation*, found online.
- **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.
- **MISSION** – 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:
  - **MATTHEW 13:24-30** – The Parable of the Weeds has allegorical elements, that is, the elements of the parable have real-life counterparts. The “wheat” represents the people of the Kingdom. The “weeds” represent those who are not part of the Kingdom. The “barn” is God’s Kingdom, and the “harvest” is the judgment that will occur at the end of the age. Jesus’ main point about the Kingdom is that God’s people and the people of this world will co-exist for a long time, not being separated until the judgment and reward at the end of the age.

- **MATTHEW 24** – This chapter is very difficult to understand, so the questions are designed to lead people to a conclusion as well as help them discover truth for themselves. The questions the disciples asked shows that they did not truly understand what they were asking. To them, the destruction of the Temple, the sign of His coming (to conquer and reign as opposed to wandering the countryside) and the close of the age were all the same event. We have the benefit of history and can see that that this was not the case. History has shown that the destruction of the

Temple is really a separate question from that of Jesus' reign and the end of the age. The main difficulty in interpreting this chapter is discerning which part of the question Jesus is answering, so it's important to look for contextual clues.

It is also helpful to know how the Bible looks at time in general. We tend to think of the Bible as dividing time into the New Testament and Old Testament eras. Actually, the outlook throughout the Bible is that time is divided into *the Present Age* (marked by suffering, yet not without hope of deliverance), and *the Age to Come* (marked by the deliverance of God's people from every enemy, physical and spiritual). From the perspective of the New Testament, the Age to Come was inaugurated in the life and ministry of Jesus, but would not be consummated until His return in the glorious power of His Kingdom. Keep this in mind as you help your JG struggle through Matthew 24.

- **VERSES 4-8** – Jesus' introductory response is to comfort the disciples. He does not want them to be deceived or alarmed by the wars, famines, earthquakes and other troubles in the world. These should be expected, like the first signs of a woman's labor pains, and are *not* signs of the end of the age.
- **VERSES 9-14** – These verses describe in more detail what the time of "birth pains" will be like. The word used to describe this time is "tribulation," meaning trouble, or difficulty. There will be hatred, betrayal, deception and apostasy. But at the same time, the gospel will be preached to the ends of the earth. This shows that Jesus is describing the Church age from the time that others will come in His name falsely (verse 5), to when the gospel will have penetrated every nation on earth (verse 14). The church age will be a time of success and growth for the Church but also a time of tremendous opposition. Then the end of the age will come. Verses 4-14 then, are addressing the second part of the disciples' question.
- **VERSES 15-28** – The severe trial and suffering described as "great tribulation" in verse 21 is associated with events that are local to Judea. This, and the fact that Jesus speaks of the desolation of Jerusalem (all Jews thought of Jerusalem and specifically the Temple as "the holy place"), indicates that this great tribulation would be caused by a war that would take place *only* in Judea. Jesus is now answering the first part of the disciples' question. There is no indication of when this war would be or how long it would last, but the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70 seems to fulfill

the details of the prophecy. History reveals that the Jews did, in fact, flee to mountain strongholds during this time, and there was a high expectation of a Messianic rescue though none came.

- **VERSES 29-31** – It's difficult to know what Jesus means by "immediately after the tribulation of those days...", though He is probably referring to the time that will follow the tribulation/ Church age, not the "great tribulation" of 1<sup>st</sup> century Judea. The signs of Jesus' coming are cosmic in nature (verses 29-30), indicating that they are greater and more awesome than any earthly calamity that we can imagine. These cosmic disturbances would lead one to think of the end of the present age. At that time the Son of Man will return in the clouds (a reference to Daniel 7:13) announced by a trumpet call. The people of earth will mourn (indicating they know their doom is near), while the people of God will be gathered from around the world and raised to greet Him in the air. There are unmistakable similarities between this passage and Matthew 13, as well as the passages you studied last week on glorification and the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4), and the depiction of the Judgment in Revelation 11. These similarities are described in the unit material. The similarities are a strong indication that all of these things – the resurrection, glorification, and gathering of the saints, the judgment of unbelievers and the consummation of Christ's Kingdom – will occur at the Second Coming of Christ.
- **VERSES 32-35** – The "he" in verse 33 is the Son of Man, Jesus. "This generation" in verse 34 refers to the generation that is alive at the time of the cosmic signs referred to in verse 29-30. The Second Coming will occur during this generation's lifetime.
- **VERSES 36-41** – Jesus is still dealing with the second part of the disciples' question. He affirms that no one knows the day of His return, thus it will come unexpectedly on the world, just as the flood came unexpectedly in Noah's day. Those who are "taken" are not believers who are raptured out of the world before a seven-year tribulation. They are the unbelievers who are swept away in judgment just as they were in the days of Noah.
- **VERSES 36-51** – The moral of the story, so to speak, is "always be faithful." The discussion will probably gravitate toward details of interpretation, books about prophecy or current events in the Middle East. But you should make sure the conversation loops back to Jesus' exhortation about faithful service to the Kingdom during the present age of tribulation.
- **JOHN 16:33** – Believers can expect trouble in this present age of tribulation. But we are not left without hope. Jesus is our victorious King, so we can be at peace knowing He will return for us.

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about the Second Coming that you'll want to make clear:

- The Second Coming of Christ will bring about the end of the present age. When He returns it will be to reign as King, reward and glorify His people, and judge His enemies.
- There will be no seven-year period of worldwide tribulation. Tribulation is actually a characteristic of the Church age that will end when Christ returns.
- The Second Coming will not be a two-stage event. The Rapture will not be a separate, secret return of Christ that precedes the Second Coming by seven years. It is part of the Second Coming and will be immediately followed by Jesus' descent to earth to establish His Kingdom.
- The prophetic glimpses we have of the future are intended to encourage us to live faithfully in devoted service to the Kingdom of God.

- **EQUIPPING** – Some in your JG may have believed the common Dispensationalist teaching on the Rapture and Tribulation all their lives. If so, these teachings have probably had an impact on their spiritual growth. For some people, this impact is decidedly negative, so that any discussion of the end times leaves them feeling insecure and anxious about Christ's return. If someone in your JG struggles with this, remind them of what they've learned about God's grace: God did it all so that they could get it all.

When Jesus spoke about the need for faithfulness He wasn't implying that people had to earn their qualifications for His Kingdom when He returns. Such a performance motivation would only generate anxiety or self-righteousness, while killing true biblical assurance. Grace motivated faithfulness looks hopefully to His return, knowing that He has qualified you for His Kingdom. A lack of hopeful longing for Jesus' return (as demonstrated by a lack of faithfulness to His Word) is a strong indication that one doesn't belong to the Kingdom.

- **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.

## 5

## BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW 6

## 6

## The Millennium

## ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – encourage your JG to read the supplemental reading materials, *The Millennium* and *Numerology*, found online.
- **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:
  - **JOHN 12:20-33** – The interesting thing about this passage, is that Jesus uses the occasion of some Greeks who wanted to speak with Him to talk about how He would draw all men (like these Greeks) to himself through the cross. When Jesus spoke of “*the hour...for the Son of Man to be glorified*” He was referring to all the events surrounding the culmination of His ministry, from the Last Supper to the resurrection and ascension.

His “hour” would be a victory over Satan, resulting in his forceful casting out and a loss of his authority. It is not coincidental that Satan’s defeat and the drawing of the Gentiles both result from Christ’s victory on the cross.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28** – Paul is clearly stating that Jesus’ reign began at His resurrection. Yet it is clear that the influence of sin and of Satan have not yet been completely erased from the world. Jesus is reigning now in the sense that His people are being freed from the penalty of sin, and from the power of Satan, as He draws all nations to Himself. This process will continue until He defeats the final enemy, “death.” This will occur when Jesus returns in power and glory to completely establish His

earthly reign. Then, His reign will be complete and absolute in both the spiritual and physical dimensions.

- **EPHESIANS 1:15-23** – In this passage, Paul describes Jesus’ reign as absolute, completely unchallenged by any other power or authority, although its primary focus is in the spiritual dimension during this age. His reign is pictured here as beginning with Christ’s ascension to the right hand of the Father, and has a special connection with His authority over the Church.
- **EPHESIANS 2:4-7** – Here, Paul describes believers as being made alive with Christ, raised with Christ to heaven, and seated with Christ in the heavenly realm as a display of His matchless grace. To be seated with Christ means that Christians are enthroned with Christ, and in some measure share in His spiritual authority.

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- **REVELATION 20** – This is the one passage in the Bible that describes a 1,000 year reign of Christ. It is highly symbolic and should be compared to and interpreted in light of other narrative or teaching passages in Scripture.

- **VERSES 1-3** – Satan is described as being bound and thrown into a pit so that he loses His freedom to deceive the nations. Some believers interpret Satan’s binding in verses 2-3 to imply a total loss of his authority. But this passage only mentions his loss of authority to deceive the nations.

Satan’s binding will last 1,000 years, coinciding with Jesus’ reign with His people. Since Revelation regularly attaches symbolic meaning to numbers (e.g. 7, 12, 666, 144,000) it would seem unreasonable to attach a literal meaning to 1,000 in this passage. It would be more consistent with the entire book to interpret 1,000 as a number indicating a lengthy period, fully completing God’s intended time.

- **VERSES 4-6** – The vision of martyred souls and thrones seems to indicate that this is a vision of realities in heaven.

Those who are martyred are said to participate in the first resurrection. They are not subject to the second death (Hell) and reign with Christ during the millennial period. The description of those who participate in this first

resurrection is also true spiritually of all Christians who, through faith in Christ, have escaped the terror of Hell, have been raised spiritually with Christ and presently reign with Him in the heavens.

The second resurrection spoken of here seems to refer to the general physical resurrection at the end of the age, though the focus is on those who do not participate in the first resurrection (i.e. unbelievers).

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about the Millennium that you'll want to make clear:
  - The Millennium is described as a period when Satan is prevented from deceiving the nations, and Christ reigns in heaven with His people.
  - According to the Jesus and Paul, this description applies to the present Church age. Jesus' victory on the cross has resulted in Satan being "cast out" and the drawing of the Gentiles nations to the light of the gospel. Jesus has been elevated above every rule and authority, and His people sit enthroned with Him in heavenly places.
  - Therefore, the Millennium is a description of the present, heavenly reign of Jesus through His people. This vision of Jesus' reign was given to John to encourage and embolden his readers to live as people of the gospel during a time a persecution.
  - The amillennial view seems to fit the New Testament facts the best. However, many godly, Bible-believing Christians disagree, and humility should keep us from being overly dogmatic on this point.
- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss how the present reign of Jesus should impact a Christian's worldview. Give special attention to how it should affect our priorities and our commitment to live as ambassadors of the gospel to the world.
- **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

## The Final Judgment &amp; New Heavens and Earth

## ASSIGNMENTS

- **TRUTH** – encourage your JG to read the supplemental reading material, *The Rapture*, found online.
- **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:
  - **LEVITICUS 16:11-13** – This is an example of how the gospel was presented to Israel in the Old Testament. Emphasize that the gospel promised that God would “dwell” with His people, i.e. live in communion with them.

- **ISAIAH 13** – This chapter is an example of how the Old Testament portrayed “the Day of the Lord” as a time of terrible judgment upon God’s enemies. This example in Isaiah is a prophecy of judgment on Babylon that would be executed by the Medes. This prophecy was fulfilled in 539 BC when Cyrus the Great conquered the Babylonian empire. However, details such as the cosmic disturbances (vv 10, 13), and the reference to Sodom and Gomorrah (v 19), would indicate that a far greater calamity is ultimately in store for another fulfillment of the Day of the Lord.
- **MATTHEW 19:23-30** – Jesus promised that His disciples would sit on thrones, indicating they would hold authority to rule and judge in the Age to Come. All of Jesus’ followers will receive both eternal and temporal rewards for their devotion to Him.  
  
Jesus’ reference to “the new world” indicates that after the judgment, the world would be restored to its original pre-Fall order.
- **MARK 1:14-15** – Part of understanding eschatology (the doctrines of last things), is having the proper perspective on promise and fulfillment. The Old Testament looks exclusively to the future to see the fulfillment of God’s promises. The New Testament looks to the present in the person and work of Jesus. In his life the last days were inaugurated, though not yet complete. Christians must recognize that we live at a time when the promises of the Age to Come overlap the suffering of the Present Age. See the chart on page 8 of the student guide for a pictorial description of this overlap.
- **2 PETER 3:1-13** – Peter wrote about the destruction of this world by fire to warn his readers not to be complacent about the apparent slowness of the Day of the Lord. Instead, God’s people should be diligent to live lives of holiness (v 11) since the Day of the Lord will come.
- **REVELATION 20:7-21:27** – Your JG should be able to create a rough outline with these main headings:
  - The binding of Satan to prevent deception of the nations during the Millennium (20:1-3)
  - The reign of Christ and His faithful followers during the Millennium (20:4-6)
  - Satan’s last deception following the Millennium and his final destruction (20:7-10)
  - The judgment and eternal damnation of those not listed in the book of life (20:11-15)
  - The new heavens and earth where God will dwell with His people (21:1-4)
  - Eternal blessedness awaits God’s children, but eternal damnation awaits the wicked (21:5-8)
  - The Bride (Church) and new world described by a vision of a heavenly Jerusalem (21:9-27)

Notice that Revelation 21:3 expresses the fulfillment of the gospel in language that parallels Leviticus 26, i.e. that God will dwell with humanity. Ask your JG about these verses. Help them to understand the centrality of God's presence in the hope of the gospel. Life in the new heaven and earth will be blessed *because we will be with God*.

- **TRUTH** – Here are the main points about the Final Judgment and the new heavens and earth that you'll want to make clear:
  - The gospel is essentially a promise that God's Kingdom (His reign over all that is His) and presence would again be with humanity as it was in the Garden before the Fall.
  - The Old Testament Day of the Lord will be fulfilled in the Final Judgment.
  - Christians have nothing to fear in the Final Judgment since Christ bore our punishment on the cross for us.
  - The Old Testament promise of the gospel ("God with us") began to be fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus and will reach completion at His return and in the new heavens and earth.
  - Christians will reign with Christ eternally in the new heavens and earth in the presence and glory of God. Our glorified, physical bodies will be free from sin forever.
- **EQUIPPING** – This week, your JG was asked to write about how the Final Judgment and the new heavens and earth will impact the way they think and live in regard to various issues of life. Allow several JG members to share and discuss what they have written.
- **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

## Focusing on the Right Target: Influencing the Heart of your Child

## 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:

- **GENESIS 8** – The Flood was a means to punish evil in the world, but it did not erase evil from the human race because Noah and his families were “carriers” of the disease called sin. God showed incredible grace to them and us by allowing the human race to continue and promising not to destroy it again, despite the fact that sin was not yet fully removed.

Every human being is born with a sin nature – an inclination toward evil (verse 21). This means that parenting will always be difficult. Children, to a greater or lesser degree, will always seek their own will, and often open their hearts to Christ through the influence of devoted Christian parents.

- **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7** – The point you want to make with these verses is that God commands parents to be instrumental in passing faith to the next generation. Christian parents are to point their children to the love and fear of God through constant teaching and informal conversation.
- **1 KINGS 8:54-61** – Solomon asked God to incline Israel's hearts because he knew that their hearts (like ours and our children's) were naturally inclined toward sin. An inclination is a tendency, or habit of thought and action. A heart that is inclined toward God sees Him as the God of love and mercy that He is. It is curious (at least) about how to be in relationship with Him, and is open to His authority and direction.
- **JOHN 1:19-34** – Just as John the Baptist influenced Israel to incline their hearts toward Jesus, so Christian parents must exercise their influence to help their children see that a life lived for Jesus is a worthy and blessed pursuit.
- **PROVERBS 4:10-27** – This passage demonstrates how Solomon put Deuteronomy 6:7 into practice. He was actively engaged (life-on-life) with his son to impart his own spiritual life product. He wanted his son to comprehend the wisdom and blessing of a Godward life. He especially focused on his son's heart, knowing that it was the center of all his thoughts, desires and actions. Use this passage, especially verse 23, to illustrate that parents' Godward influence on their children should focus on their hearts.
- **LUKE 15:11-32** – Use this passage to clarify the point that good behavior can mask a wayward heart. Therefore, the heart should be the target of parental influence.
- **TRUTH** – You will want to focus your discussion on these five truths about passing on our faith:
  - Children come into the world predisposed toward evil (Genesis 8:21).
  - Christian parents must counter this inclination by demonstrating an attractive, Godward (Christ-centered) life (Deuteronomy 6:7).
  - Christian parents should engage their children (life-on-life) to impart their spiritual life.
  - Christian parenting focuses on the heart, not behavior (Luke 15:28-30).
  - The Holy Spirit uses a parent's love for Jesus to incline a child's heart toward Christ.
- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG time to discuss these questions. Give special attention to the 1<sup>st</sup> question.
- **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

## Understanding the Competition: Dealing With Cultural Influences

## 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 give more time to the **EQUIPPING** section. Here are some tips that may help:
  - **1 KINGS 11:1-13** – Solomon's sin of intermarrying with pagan women led him to break the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> commandments by worshipping other God's via the pagan idols he set up for his wives.

God promised to punish these sins by taking most of the kingdom of Israel from Solomon's descendants. Nevertheless, God showed mercy for David's sake in that the tribe of Judah would continue to serve Solomon's descendants.

- **1 KINGS 12:1-20** – Rehoboam rejected the wise advice of his father's counselors. Instead, he listened to his own rash, arrogant friends. When Israel heard Rehoboam's arrogance, they rejected him and anointed Jeroboam King over Israel instead.

Both Solomon and Rehoboam allowed themselves to be influenced by people who were not followers of God. In the words of Proverbs 13:20, they listened to *fools*.

- **PROVERBS 13:20** – This proverb teaches that our choice of companions has a powerful influence in our lives,

either for good or bad. It serves as a warning that we should be cautious about whom and what we choose for companions, since they will inevitably influence our lives. In the book of Proverbs, wisdom and foolishness are frequently contrasted by a strong moral component, that is, a fool disregards God's law, while the wise man obeys it. Therefore, the influence of our companions (directly and indirectly) can have both a behavioral and moral/spiritual impact on our lives.

Parents should wisely apply this principle in their decisions about which influences to allow in their children's lives. Direct personal influences (friends, coaches, etc) and indirect influences (TV, magazines, music, etc) should either be restricted or monitored if they are found to have a potentially negative spiritual or moral impact.

- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG plenty of time to discuss the equipping exercise. Encourage them to share their thoughts. Be careful not to disparage anyone's point of view, but encourage them to think biblically and to see the need to know what the Bible teaches. Some may have a tendency toward legalism, while others may be cavalier. Bring both back to a parent's primary task and challenge them to think about how their perspective demonstrates an attractive, Godward life.
- **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.

## 6

## GOD-HONORING PARENTING 3

## 3

## The Power of Parental Influence: For Better or For Worse

## 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:
  - **1 KINGS 22:51-53** – Ahaziah "...walked in the way of his father [Ahab] and in the way of his mother [Jezebel] and in the way of Jeroboam" (verse 52). This means that he lived and reigned as Ahab and Jezebel had influenced him, practicing all sorts of wickedness and idolatry. They directly influenced him to live a life of rebellion against the Lord. But Ahaziah was also indirectly influenced by an earlier king: Jeroboam, who was the first king of the northern Israelite kingdom which rebelled

against Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Jeroboam is notorious for introducing the worship of two golden calves to ensure that his people would not worship at the Temple in Jerusalem and perchance long to be reunited with the southern kingdom, over which David's descendants reigned. He declared, *"Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt"* (1 Kings 12:29). The declaration that Ahaziah walked in the way of Jeroboam means that he also encouraged Israel to worship the golden calves.

a proactive approach to influencing their children by what they teach and model. However, don't let your JG take this proverb deterministically. A proverb only summarizes what is typical of life. It doesn't guarantee a negative (or positive) outcome. The grace of God is still at work in their children and can overcome any obstacles in their path, even those that are left by parents. Encourage your JG to trust God to make them the parents He wants them to be, and to trust their children's lives to the God of all grace.

- **PROVERBS 22:6** – This proverb is a warning against a passive approach to parenting. Children who are left to their own way, typically don't stray from the path they set for themselves. It is also true that children tend to reflect the influence of their parents (good or bad, active or passive) for their entire lives. Parents should be sobered by this truth, as they consider that their virtues and their baggage will tend to rub off on their children even if it is not intentionally taught. Therefore, parents should adopt
- **EPHESIANS 6:1-4** – An example of unjustly frustrating children is to increase their responsibilities without a requisite increase in privileges. Another example is relating to children from a performance motivation, i.e. requiring good performance in order to receive love and favor. Besides destroying the parent/child relationship, these kinds of frustrations can also destroy a child's faith as they project their anger onto God.
- **2 TIMOTHY 1:1-5** – This passage is an example that the faith of a mother can influence a child to be attracted to Christ, apparently, even in the absence of the same influence from a father. You may need to emphasize that this is an example, not a promise for every family.
- **TRUTH** – Allow your JG to discuss any of the issues that influence the culture of the home and any of the 8 principles for building a Christ-centered home. Your JG may also want to discuss other principles they may consider important. Just be sure to marry this discussion with the practical application and goal setting of the **EQUIPPING** section.

- **EQUIPPING** – Spend the majority of your group time discussing ways to apply the principles contained in this material. It's important for your JG to learn how to massage truth to make it usable. Challenge your JG to come up with *specific applications to their own experience as a parent and specific goals for which they could be held accountable*. For example, "Last week you shared that you were going to do x application so that you would reach x goal. How are you progressing? Are you getting closer to your goal?" The natural tendency is to get a little lazy about applications and goal setting. (After all, growth and change requires our effort, even when God is at work in us.) So, really challenge your JG to not blow this exercise off. Remind them of the importance of their goal – to influence their children with an attractive, Christ-centered life.
- **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.

## 6

## GOD-HONORING PARENTING 4

## 4

## Will I See My Children in Heaven?

## 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.
- Collect all *Semester II Spiritual Assessments* from your JG.

## 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:
  - **GENESIS 18:16-19** – God's covenant with Abraham was intended to bring him and his descendants into relationship with God. This didn't mean that every one of them would walk in His ways and rightly relate to Him. But, it did mean that every one of them could learn of God's promises and commands from their fathers. Thus each was born into a community of faith that understood God's requirements and experienced His blessing.

- **MARK 10:13-16** – “...for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” In this statement, Jesus taught that the simple, trusting faith of children is the model of saving faith for people of all ages. Their example should be followed.
- **ACTS 2:22-41, 16:25-34** – In both of these passages, someone asks how salvation is achieved. The answer given is that repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition required to receive forgiveness of sins. And this promise of salvation is offered with this condition to all, young and old alike.
- **ROMANS 2:25-3:4** – In 3:2, Paul only mentions the advantage of knowing the “oracle”, or declared will of God. This was a great advantage for the Old Covenant Jew, who unlike gentiles, knew God’s promises and requirements. There are many other advantages to being part of God’s covenant people, including the assurance of God’s protection, provision, guidance and discipline to name a few.

Children of Christian families also experience these same advantages, plus they have the advantage of learning the gospel from a very young age. While this is no guarantee that each child of a Christian family will become a follower of Christ, Christian parents can certainly expect that the spiritual advantages their children receive will bear the fruit of repentance and faith in most instances.

- **EPHESIANS 6:1-4** – Help the parents in your JG to wrestle with the responsibility God has laid on them. Help them understand that their responsibility must be met with action. (You can reference the principles listed in last week’s material). However, help them to understand that while their responsibility is to invest in their children’s spiritual development, that responsibility does not extend as far as their children’s eternal destiny. Their children bear that responsibility before God.

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- **TRUTH** – Use your discussion time to focus on the two errors described on page 5 of the unit material. Many parents are far too passive about their spiritual responsibility regarding their children. Others, especially those with older wayward children, may carry unnecessary guilt, or misguided hopes. Challenge all of these parents to accept the reality of their responsibility, not for their children’s eternal destiny, but for their spiritual training. Challenge them to recommit themselves to their parental responsibility, while reminding them that they will find God’s forgiveness for parental failings at the cross.
  - **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 opportunities and use the discussion to encourage your JG to be more intentional about creating and taking advantage of 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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