

“Be With Me/Remain In Me” Phases 3/4 Ongoing Accountability Group (OAG) Lessons

Table of Contents

- **“Be with Me/Remain In Me” Small Group Study Format**
- **Enriching Relationships (Six Lessons)**
- **Christian Service (Four Lessons)**
- **A Nine Lesson Study Of Values**
- **Nine Lesson Study Of Ephesians**
- **Self-Discipline (Ten Lessons)**
- **A Ten Lesson Study Of Philippians**
- **Good And Godly Attitudes (Ten Lessons)**
- **Four Lessons On The Armor Of God**
- **Five Lessons To Live By**
- **Small Group Lessons On Various Topics**
 - Love In Action
 - The Second Coming Of Christ
 - For God And Country
 - Christianity: A Relationship, Not A Religion
 - Making Faith Decisions
 - Expressing Thankfulness
 - Forgiveness
 - Becoming Great In God's Kingdom
 - Mountain Moving Faith
 - Why Worry When You Can Pray?
 - Obedience To Christ
 - Turning Brokenness Into Blessing
 - Unexpected Guests
 - Good & Godly Advice
 - Taking Hold Of Tomorrow
 - Where Is Jesus Now?
 - Taking Time To Remember
 - John: The Rugged Individual

Accountability Small Group

“Be with Me/Remain In Me” Small Group Study Format

CONNECTING

1. Share about what has happened throughout the previous week.
2. Share quiet time Bible Reading Highlights, significant entry from your spiritual journal or insights from personal Bible study.
3. Break into review groups and review a new verse that you have memorized within the past month.

SEEKING GOD (Drawing Near to God)

1. Are there any personal roadblocks, challenges or fears that you would like to discuss regarding your life or ministry?
2. What should we pray about today that would make a difference for you?

To maximize prayer time and allow greater opportunity for personal sharing, break into subgroups of 3-4 people. This is especially important if your group is more than eight people.

SHARING CHRIST (Declaring the Good News)

1. During the past month, how have you sought to build relationships with the unbelievers on your *Five Most Beloved prayer and care* list (or others) in order to direct them toward Jesus Christ?
2. What outreach activity might we do as a group or with another ministry of our church in order to reach out to our unsaved friends?

COMMITTING TO ONEANOTHER (Deepening Spiritual Growth)

1. The foundation of spiritual growth is your understanding of God's Word. We grow best as we combine obedience to the Bible in the context of close accountability relationships.
2. Study the selected Bible Application Lesson:

USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SMALL GROUP LESSON DISCUSSION GUIDES HERE.

SERVING OTHERS (Demonstrating God's Love)

1. Give a brief update on your personal ministry.
2. Christians should be known by the good works they do within the community. What service project or act of kindness could you do as an individual, as a group or with others ministries of the church in order to demonstrate Christ's love in a tangible way?

CLOSING

Close in prayer and enjoy refreshments and fellowship together.

ENRICHING RELATIONSHIPS

Enriching Relationships To Bless And Be Blessed

Regardless of what has happened (or not happened) in our lives, all of us have a God-given need to be **blessed**.

1. What are some words that describe what a blessing means?
2. What happens in our lives if we feel someone's blessing?
3. What happens in our lives if we feel (even subconsciously) the lack of someone's blessing?
4. How is a person who feels a lack of parental blessing likely to feel about God? Why?
5. *Genesis 27* records that Esau lost his father's blessing to his brother Jacob.
 - a. How did that happen?
 - b. How did Esau respond?
 - c. What was Isaac's response?
 - d. How were the two blessings different?
6. The five parts of Scriptural blessing. (Reference: *The Blessing*, by Gary Smalley and John Trent)
 - a. **Meaningful Touch**, *Genesis 27:26* What are some ways this can be done? Why is this so important to the way God has created us?
 - a. **Spoken Words**. *Genesis 27:27* List some things that can be said to a person beyond, "I love you." Why is it sometimes difficult to accept words of blessing?
 - b. **Expressing High Value**. *Genesis 27:28*. If something has value, it has what? Why is it so important to choose words of high value when we bless a person? (*James 3:3-12*)
 - c. **About a Special Future**. *Genesis 27:29*. What affect does a "word picture" have on a child? Relate a personal experience of this from your own life (positive or negative).
 - d. **A Personal Commitment**. *Genesis 27:33*. Why is this such an important part of a blessing? Name one person who needs to hear your active commitment to their future today.
7. Discuss this quote (C. Neil Strait):

"Take from a man his wealth, and you hinder him; take from him his purpose, and you slow him down. But take from a man his hope, and you stop him."

Enriching Relationships

The Miracle Of Forgiveness

1. Have you ever held a grudge against someone? What negative effect did it have on your life?

1. Read *Psalms 130:1-4*. What is the main truth that we learn from this passage?

2. An unforgiving spirit may take many forms. Define each of these three:
 - a. Resentment:
 - b. Bitterness:
 - c. Hate:

3. Read *Ephesians 4:22-32*. What does Paul have to say about an unforgiving spirit and what are we to do?

2. How can an unforgiving spirit hurt you more than it hurts another person?
 - a. What can it do to you physically?
 - b. How can it cause you to send out negative messages?
 - c. How can it make you an emotional slave to the other person?
 - d. How can it take you out of fellowship with God? (*1 John 1:7*)

4. Discuss this together: “Without forgiveness there are no enduring relationships.” Why is this true?

5. When we refuse to forgive another person, what does it do to the grace and forgiveness of God in our own life? (*Matthew 6:12*)

6. Some guidelines in asking for forgiveness...
 - a. How soon should we do it? Why?
 - b. Should we identify our own sins or the other person's? Why?
 - c. If the other person is hesitant to forgive us (for whatever reason), what should be our response?

Enriching Relationships Partners Together

1. Think of yourself and your special abilities as a part of the human body. For example: eye, ear, hand, nose. Which part are you and why?

2. Read *1 Corinthians 12:20*. How is the church like a body?

3. How is the spiritual body of Christ formed? (*1 Corinthians 12:4-12,18*)

What is the common bond or connection? (*1 Corinthians 12:13*)

4. Why is it important that there be diversity? (*1 Corinthians 12:14-20*)

Can a believer excuse himself/herself from being active in the body since he/she is not like others?

5. Is it possible for a part of the body to exist alone?

Can you live the Christian life to the fullest without being active in the church? Why?

6. Perhaps you or someone you know lives without a part of their body. What is it like?
 - a. How important are your brothers and sisters in Christ to you?
 - b. How does the suffering or rejoicing of someone in your group or church affect you?
(*1 Corinthians 12:25, 26*)

7. What is the problem when everyone wants to do the same thing in the body?

Enriching Relationships

Love Can Be Repaired

1. What do you think is hardest: repairing a relationship or discarding it and living with the consequences?

2. Can love be repaired when self-esteem has been damaged? If so, how?

3. Can love be repaired when a person chooses to live with the selfish life?

What does selfishness do to a marriage?

What does selfishness do to a parent-child relationship?

What does selfishness do to a friendship?

4. What did the prodigal son say to the father that tells us he was choosing the selfish life?
(*Luke 15:11-12*)

What can we do when people make the wrong choices? (*Luke 15:13-21*)

What does our Heavenly Father do when we choose wrongly? (*Luke 15:22-24*)

5. Can love be repaired when we act like the older brother and cling to bitterness? Why not?
(*Luke 15:25-32*)

What are we to do if we have bitterness?

Review the complete story of the prodigal son in *Luke 15:11-32* and identify the steps that led to the repairing of the love relationship between the father and son.

Enriching Relationships

How To Handle Criticism In A Positive Way

1. Caution: This lesson is for the strong and those who want to be strong! **Guarantee:** You will be criticized. What are the two ways you can handle criticism that is directed toward you?
2. Even Jesus our Lord (whose motives were pure and character spotless) was criticized:
 - a. *Matthew 11:9*
 - b. *Mark 2:16*
 - c. *John 8:48*
3. Read *1 Peter 2:21-23*. Discuss some of the ways Christians can expect criticism from the other people around them.

4. Seven Positive Ways to Handle Criticism

- a. **Ask, “Is this constructive or destructive?”** What can you discover by a person’s attitude when they are criticizing you?
- a. **Determine not to waste energy fighting destructive energy.** Read the story from *Luke 9:51-56* and discuss the lesson for us in Jesus’ example.
- b. **Try to understand who this person is to you.** Read *Proverbs 27:4-7*. What difference does a person’s motive have in the giving of criticism?
- c. **Ask, “Is this from a crowd or one person?”** How is it possible to put lesser value on a criticism if it only comes from one person?
- d. **Ask, “Is there some truth in what has been said?”** Read *Hebrews 12:5-11*. What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

How has God used constructive criticism from someone as a learning/growing opportunity for you?

- e. **Determine to please God first and then people.** What are the chances that we will **always** please everybody?
What does the Bible teach us about the source of our self-worth?
- f. **Go on the offensive with a positive action.** Read *Romans 12:21*. Name some creative ways of putting love into action after you have been criticized.

“THERE IS NO GREATER INVITATION TO LOVE
THAN LOVING FIRST.”

St. Augustine (354-430)

Enriching Relationships

Lord, What About Him/Her?

Soon after the resurrection of our Lord, Peter was asked three times, “Do you love me?” It was a very personal question and Peter answered very positively. Then after Jesus indicated the kind of death Peter would experience, Peter changed the subject! Read about it in *John 21:20-23*

1. When have you compared yourself to another person and came up on the “minus” side. When have you compared yourself to another person and came up on the “plus” side?
2. Why is it never a good idea to compare ourselves with each other?
3. When Peter asked, “Lord, what about him?” what did Jesus answer (in your own words)?
1. List some things that other Christians seem to be able to do that go against what God has shown you?
2. Why is it so important that we each walk in the light that God so faithfully and individually gives to us?
4. Read *1 John 1:5-7*. In a practical way, what does it mean to walk in the light as opposed to walking in the darkness?
5. What is the message in *1 John 1:7* because of the word “**if**”? What are the two great benefits of personal obedience?
6. What hope does John give in *1 John 1:9-10* and *2:1-2*, when we fail to live the light of His love?
7. In your spiritual life, what way(s) are you still a **child**...so much to learn? In your spiritual life, what way(s) are you an **adult**...at the peak of your strength?
8. How have you experienced growth recently by “walking in the light?”
 - _____ A scripture passage has come alive to me.
 - _____ I have forgiven someone who sinned against me.
 - _____ I have served my family instead of demanding to be served.
 - _____ I have a stronger desire to live my life God’s way.
 - _____ I have given up a destructive habit.
 - _____ I am more willing to seek God’s wisdom in the choices I make.
 - _____ The joy of the Lord has been my strength.
 - _____ Little things do not worry me like they used to.
 - _____ I have shared my faith with another person.
 - _____ God has given me a healthy self-love.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christian Service Broken To Bless

1. What kind of benefits might come out of an experience of being broken?
2. Read *I Peter 5:5-10*.
 - a. Who does God oppose and who does He give His grace and help to?
 - b. If you humble yourself instead of rebelling when hard times come and submit to God's leadership in your life, what will He do?
 - c. When suffering and tough times come, who is it that we must look out for so that we are not destroyed?
3. Read *I Peter 5:10* together and have someone in your group share how, after they suffered for a while, God has restored them and what good has come out of this experience?
4. Make a list of people of faith, both in the Scriptures and in your experience that God has greatly used after they have experienced brokenness?
5. Talk about this quote: "In love's service, only broken hearts will do."

Believe it or not – Trouble can be good for you!

1. What do we learn from *Romans 8:28*?
2. What are some of the troubles that came into Joseph, the dreamer's life?
3. What would have happened to Joseph if he had stayed home and had been pampered and spoiled by his father?
4. What fine tuning in Joseph's character do we see come out when he comes to face to face with his brothers who have betrayed him? (*Genesis 45*)
5. Read Joseph's great testimony in *Genesis 50:20* and talk about what it means and how we apply it to our lives.

TURN YOUR PAIN INTO GAIN

1. What would we do without caring persons?
2. Where did the Good Samaritan in the Bible learn to have compassion? How do we learn to have compassion? How many compassionate people do we need in our church?
3. In your relationships, how are you relating daily to others? In what ways can you improve your relationships?

IN EVERY ADVERSITY LOOK FOR A STRIKING OPPORTUNITY

1. Share different experiences of how adversity has been turned into an opportunity for ministry and service.
2. What are the things a person can learn through adversity to make them more effective in ministry?

THANK GOD YOU'VE BEEN BROKEN TO BLESS

1. What have we received because of the brokenness of Jesus? (*Isaiah 53:5-6*)
2. How is God using your brokenness right now to bless the lives of others?
3. How is He going to use your brokenness to bless others in the future?

Christian Service Improve Your Serve

1. In the newspaper recently was a headline, “THE WAY TO BE GREAT IS TO SERVE OTHERS.” Why is this an unusual one in our society today?
2. In *Romans 12:1*, what does it mean to give God “a living sacrifice?” How is this to be lived out in daily life and what is “reasonable service” and “spiritual worship?”
3. What are some ways that you, right now, serve others in Christ’s name? What are some additional ways that you would like to serve?
4. Who is our perfect model for living service? (*Mark 10:45*) What do you learn from this example?
5. Does a life of service come naturally? Why?
6. Read *Matthew 20:20-24*. What was wrong with Mother Zebedee’s request? How did it make other disciples feel?
7. Read *Matthew 20:25-28*. How does God’s way of service differ from the ways of getting to the top in this world?
8. What do we learn about Paul and why he was effective in his service to Christ? (*I Corinthians 2:1-5*)

Quote: “It is amazing what can be done for God when we don’t care who gets the credit.”

9. Why is it hard to play second fiddle? How many second fiddle players does God need? Can any ministry be effective without second fiddle players?

Why do some people hold back from serving? What are some of the joys and benefits that come into a person’s life when they really take hold of the concept of being God’s servant by serving others in the name of Jesus?

Christian Service

A Remarkable Story About Teamwork

Read *Mark 2:1-12*

1. In *Mark 2:1*, what exciting news spread throughout Capernaum?
2. In *Mark 2:2*, how many gathered in the house and what “good problem” resulted? Would you rather belong to a church that had stagnation problems or growing problems? Why?
3. In *Mark 2:2*, what did Jesus do?
4. In *Mark 2:4*, who opened a hole in the roof and why? Characterize qualities you see in those who opened a hole in the roof. What do you see about their faith? What do you see about their compassion? Who was it they were trying to help?
5. What did Jesus say to the paralytic?
6. Does this statement surprise you? What does unforgiven sin do?
7. What do we learn about the spirit of cooperation from these men who brought the paralytic to Jesus? List some of the things that we can do together that we can never do without cooperation in the church? (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*)
8. Talk about how Jesus is the answer to people’s needs today and what we can do to bring people with needs to Jesus?
9. In *Mark 2:6*, how did the teachers of the law react to all of this? When Christians are trying to help people, is it to be expected that some will criticize? How do we handle unjust and unfair criticism of our ministry? Who is it that we want most of all to please?
10. How did Jesus deal with His critics in *Mark 2:8-11*?
11. In *Mark 2:10*, what did Jesus have the authority to do? What authority does Jesus give us who make up His church? (*Matthew 16:19*) Who is it that is to carry on His ministry of forgiveness and healing in this world in His name?
12. What finally happened to the paralytic in *Mark 2:16*?
13. What should be our response to every miracle of Christ that we see performed in another person’s life or in our own?
14. Write down three miracles you have seen recently and praise God for them.
15. Who do you think patched up the roof? What important ministry in the church does this illustrate and write down all of this kind of ministry you can think of that is needed in your own local church.

Christian Service

Sowing And Reaping

1. What is a parable?
2. Why did Jesus use parables when He taught?
3. Read the parable in *Mark 4:1-8*. List the four types of soil.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
4. Read *Mark 4:13-20*. What are some things that will prevent us from harvesting a good crop?
5. What are some things that will produce an overflowing, abundant crop?
6. Read *Hosea 10:12*. Share from your own experience what has happened when you planted “good seeds of righteousness” and how you reaped love.

What does the phrase “break up your unplowed ground” mean to you? What could be some “unplowed ground” in your spiritual life?

7. What are the blessings that are promised if you do break up your unplowed ground?
 - a. *Hosea 10:12*
 - b. *Proverbs 11:18*
 - c. *Psalms 92:14*
 - d. *Psalms 126:5*
 - e. *Romans 2:10*
 - f. *Galatians 6:7-10*
 - g. *John 15:16*
8. Think about your own life and share with your group a part of your life where you need a “good harvest”. What kind of seeds are you going to start planting today to ensure an abundant harvest in the future?

A NINE LESSON STUDY OF VALUES

Values Series

Honesty

Joshua 6

Lesson 1

1. Tell about someone you know who has illustrated honesty and integrity. Was this a family member, neighbor, co-worker, business owner, etc.?
2. How important is honesty in personal friendships? What happens to a relationship when dishonesty is discovered?
3. What does God's Law state about honesty? How were the children of Israel to deal with one another? (Leviticus 19:11; Exodus 20:16)
4. How did the Apostle Paul address this issue regarding the way Christians were to deal with each other? (Ephesians 4:25, 28)
5. In Joshua 6 we find the account of the fall of Jericho at the hands of the Israelites. God had commanded Joshua and the people to destroy the city and everything in it except Rahab, the woman who had assisted the Israelite spies (Joshua 6:17-18). What instructions had been given regarding articles of silver, gold, bronze and iron? (6:19)
6. How did the Israelites act regarding the Lord's command at Jericho? (7:1)
7. What bad thing happened because of Achan's dishonesty? (7:2-5)
8. Did Joshua know why trouble had come upon the Israelites? How did he find out what the problem was? (7:6-15)
9. What dishonesty was finally uncovered that had brought the Lord's anger against the children of Israel? (7:16-23)
10. After the sin had been revealed and corrected, the Lord restored His blessing to the Israelite army (Joshua 8:1). Take inventory of your own life, is there any hidden sin or dishonesty that you need to confess to the Lord? Read Psalm 51:1-12 as an example of getting honest with God. Also read 1 John 1:9 to be reminded of God's readiness to hear from you.
10. Is there someone that you need to speak to this week to correct some dishonesty between you?

Values Series

Self-Control

Galatians 5:22-23

Lesson 2

1. How would you define "self-control?"
2. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and identify the positive qualities that church leaders should have as well as the negative traits that should be absent. Is self-control included in this list?
3. What was the common character quality that Paul wanted Titus to teach the various groups under his care? (Titus 2:1-8; 11-12)
4. What motivation did Paul offer for living a life of self-control? (1 Thessalonians 5:2-8; Titus 2:13-14)
5. What did the Apostle Peter have to say about self-control? (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7; 5:8; 2 Peter 1:6)
6. Lack of self-control is well illustrated by the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21). Describe what someone's life is like when they lack self-control.
7. What happens when Christians yield control of their lives to the Holy Spirit? (Galatians 5:16, 22-25)
8. Ephesians 4:22-28 and Colossians 3:5-14 illustrate the "Put-off, Put-on Principle." Identify what Paul says Christians are to "Put-off" and what they are to "Put-on." Discuss how "putting on" the new self through the power of the Holy Spirit can displace the acts of the sinful nature.
9. In what area of life do you want greater self-control? What can you "put-on" that will help you establish self-control in this area?

Values Series

Courage

Joshua 1:9

Lesson 3

1. Who comes to mind when you think of a courageous individual? Why are they so courageous, where does their courage come from?
2. After Moses had died, the Lord God spoke to Joshua. What commands or instructions did God give to Joshua and what encouragement did He offer? (Joshua 1:1-9)
3. What was Joshua's greatest reason for having great courage? (Joshua 1:9)
4. In the New Testament we read about Peter one of Jesus' closest friends and followers. Describe how courageous Peter was when things got difficult for Jesus. (Luke 22:33-34; 54-62)
5. See Acts 4:1-20. Here Peter is put in jail then brought before the rulers in Jerusalem. How would you describe Peter's courage while facing such strong opposition? (Acts 4:13, 18-20)
6. What was the source of Peter's great courage? (Acts 4:8)
7. What can Christians do to gain greater courage in order to live boldly and obediently for Jesus in a hostile world? (Acts 4:23-31)
8. Where do you go for strength and courage, to your own resources or to God? Pray together that the Holy Spirit will fill you with Himself and strengthen you to live courageously for Jesus Christ.

Values Series

Obedience

1 Samuel 15:22

Lesson 4

1. How would you define obedience? Can you think of an illustration of obedience in daily life?
2. Read Psalm 119:97-104. What benefits do you see that are a result of obedience to God's commands, laws and instructions?
3. What spiritual principles did Moses present to the children of Israel to instruct and motivate them regarding obedience to God?
(Deuteronomy 28:1-2,15)
4. The example of King Saul:
 - a. What was God's command to King Saul? (1 Samuel 15:3)
 - b. What was Saul's level of obedience? (1 Samuel 15:8-9)
 total rebellion
 complete obedience
 partial obedience
 - c. How did God react to Saul's level of obedience? (1 Samuel 15:11)
 - d. When confronted by Samuel, how did Saul respond?
(1 Samuel 15:13-15, 21)
 - e. What principle did God teach through the prophet Samuel?
(1 Samuel 15:22-23)
5. As Christians, what should be our motivation for active obedience to God? (John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10)
6. Based on your current desire and effort to identify God's commands and obey them, rate your level of "loving obedience."
 I'm living in loving obedience to God's revealed will.
 I need to diligently seek to know God's commands for I desire to obey.
 I know that I could do better in obeying what God has already shown me.

Values Series

Loyalty

1 Chronicles 29:18

Lesson 5

1. Tell about someone who has been loyal to you. This might be a Christian friend, a family member, someone in the work place or a childhood friend.
2. What are characteristics that describe loyalty?
3. Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 20:16-17,41-42. Describe the loyalty between Jonathan and David.
4. Why should there have been rivalry instead of loyalty between these two men?
5. Consider the story of Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth (Ruth 1). How did Ruth demonstrate tremendous loving loyalty to Naomi?
6. As Christians, what is one reason that Paul gives for remaining loyal and interdependent on one another? (Romans 12:4-5)
7. Read Romans 12:9-13. How should Christians demonstrate loving loyalty to one another?
8. King David offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing as the people presented gifts for the building of the temple. He prayed that the Lord would keep the hearts of the people loyal to God forever (1 Chronicles 29:18). How can we demonstrate our loving loyalty to God?
9. List those to whom you want to affirm your loving loyalty this week:
10. How will you express or demonstrate your loving loyalty to those you have listed above?

Values Series

Loving (Part I)

John 13:34-35

Lesson 6

1. When you were a child, from whom did you receive a lot of love? How did that person demonstrate love to you?
2. What qualities do you associate with love?
3. Is love a feeling that overwhelms you, then prompts you to positive action or do you first choose to love, then demonstrate that commitment through positive action?
4. What qualities does love have according to the Apostle Paul?
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)
5. Which of these qualities do you need to trust God to develop and demonstrate in your life?
6. How could a person exercise spiritual gifts, personal sacrifice, service, even martyrdom and yet have these things be counted as worthless? (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
7. Read John 13:34-35. What actions might indicate the kind of love that Jesus is referring to here when He commands His followers to love one another?
8. When have you suspected that someone was a Christian because of observing their "love in action?"
9. "Love really counts the most when it is difficult or costs the most." How do you respond to this statement?
10. In what context of life are you trusting God to love through you?

Values Series

Loving (Part II)

Romans 5:8

Lesson 7

1. When have you been shown unconditional love even though you were not acting in a very lovable manner?
2. What is so unique about the kind of love that God has demonstrated for mankind? (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8)
3. Read the story told by Jesus in Luke 15:11-32. Based on the two son's actions, which son might you expect the father to love and which might you expect him to resent?
4. How did the father respond to the return of the younger son? (Luke 15:20-24)
5. How have you personally experienced the forgiving love of God the Father?
6. How did the older brother act when the younger son returned? Based on his response, how would you describe his love for the younger brother? (Luke 15:29-32)
7. What does this story of forgiving love from a father reveal about God's love toward mankind? Toward you?
8. When considering your life during the last few weeks, whom do you most identify with in this story, the younger son, the older son or the father?
9. Think of how you can demonstrate God's unconditional love. To what "undeserving" person can you extend love and forgiveness this week?

Values Series

Kindness

Matthew 25:34-40

Lesson 8

1. What is kindness? Share examples of acts of kindness shown to you or kindness you have shown to others. What impact did these acts have?
2. Read Ephesians 4:32. If we are to treat each other with kindness, why is it important that we forgive one another?
3. One of the best illustrations of human kindness is found in Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. What makes this such a great example of kindness? (Luke 10:25-37)
4. Do only great acts of kindness find favor with God? (Matthew 10:42)
5. What does Jesus ask of us if we are to be His followers? (Matthew 25:34-40)
6. What about our enemies or those who do evil? How should they be treated? (Romans 12:17-21)
7. There is a popular phrase which states: "Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Would you change it in any way? How?
8. How do the hypocrites do their "acts of righteousness?" How does Christ say we should act? (Matthew 6:1-4)
9. What is one act of kindness that you will perform this week? Write down a description of the act of kindness and the person to whom you will show it.

Values Series

Humility

Philippians 2:1-11

Lesson 9

1. How would you describe a humble person? Can you give an example of a humble person from your own experience?
2. How did Christ's life teach us to live with humility? How did He display humility in His relationships?
3. What does an authentic Christian life, lived in humility, look like? Read Philippians 2:1-11 and identify at least four ways we can live in humility.
4. Discuss why these behaviors do or do not demonstrate humility:
 - ___ being a doormat for others
 - ___ respecting other's opinions
 - ___ being bold and assertive
 - ___ showing kindness to those from all walks of life
 - ___ putting yourself down
 - ___ telling others of your righteous deeds
 - ___ accepting leadership positions
5. Read Proverbs 11:2; 13:10; 16:5. How can pride be a barrier to our spiritual growth and living by God's word?
6. Identify great leaders in the Bible. How did their lives show humility? Is there a relationship in their lives between obedience and humility?
7. Read James 3:13-18. Contrast "deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom" and those done with "envy and selfish ambition." Identify well-known people who have lived by each of these values and describe their impact on others.
8. How are you doing with your humility? Rating yourself in this area is very difficult, but give it a try:
 - ___ I'm humble and proud of it!
 - ___ I feel okay about this area . . . I think.
 - ___ I really need more humility.

NINE LESSON STUDY OF EPHESIANS

A Study of Ephesians

Spiritual Blessings From God

Ephesians 1:1-14

Lesson 1

1. What has happened to you recently that you count as a blessing?
2. How have Christians been blessed? (Ephesians 1:3)
3. In verse 4, what did God decide for believers and when did He choose it?
4. What did God predestine (mark out beforehand), and what is the destiny or relationship that believers have with Him? (1:5-6)
5. What are the blessings that Christ has provided for the believer? (1:7)
6. What did Jesus Christ have to do in order to provide these blessings? (1:7)
7. Read verses 8-10 and summarize in your own words how God has and will pour out spiritual blessings.
8. God predestined the Jews to be the first to believe in Christ (1:12). What were the results of the Gentiles hearing the good news of salvation? (1:13)
9. Consider the role of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual blessing of God for believers:
 - a. God has placed the Holy Spirit as a "seal" on believers. A "seal" in Bible times showed ownership. (1:13)
 - b. God has placed the Holy Spirit as a "deposit" (down payment) to guarantee the believer's full redemption and inheritance as God's child. (1:14)
10. How does it make you feel to realize all that God has done for you? How can you express your gratitude to God this week for all His spiritual blessings?

A Study of Ephesians

Made Alive In Christ

Ephesians 1:15-2:10

Lesson 2

1. For what are you most thankful?

2. Paul gave thanks to God for the faith that the believers had in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:15-16). He also prayed that they would get to know God better (1:17). What 3 things did Paul also pray that the Ephesians would come to know as their hearts continued to be enlightened? (1:18-19)

3. What was the end result of God's great display of power which He demonstrated in Christ? (1:20-23)

4. How did Paul describe their former spiritual condition? (2:1)

5. What characteristics are true of those who are spiritually dead in sin? (2:2-3)

6. Why did God make those who were spiritually dead, alive with Christ? (2:4-5)

7. How has God honored those who have been made alive in Christ? (2:6)

8. Why is it that no one can say he has earned his own salvation? (2:8-9)

9. Have you ever had pride in your good deeds?

10. We are God's workmanship. (2:10) How can you see God's creative workmanship operating in your life?

11. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, what good work for the Kingdom of God do you hope to accomplish this week?

A Study of Ephesians

One In Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22

Lesson 3

1. Tell about a time when you felt excluded as an outsider because of social, religious or racial differences? How did you feel and react in that situation?
2. What do you know about the racial and ethnic differences that have historically existed between Jews and Gentiles? How did Paul state these differences? (Ephesians 2:11-12)
3. How did Christ's work on the cross transform the condition of the Gentiles in relationship to God? (2:13)
4. How did Christ's work on the cross serve to reconcile and unify Jews and Gentiles? (2:14-18)
5. How are some of the ethnic groups in our city, nation and world needing reconciliation? With what social, economic or ethnic groups have you had to overcome division, hostility and or prejudice?
6. In Christ, what is the new spiritual status of the Gentiles? (2:19-22)
7. How does the Gospel of Jesus break down social, religious and ethnic barriers?
8. If Paul were speaking to your church about reconciliation, would his words be filled with praise or disappointment?
9. How can you demonstrate the unity that should exist in Christ's church? What can you do this week to show love and acceptance to a Christian who is socially, culturally or racially different from you?

A Study of Ephesians

A Captive of Christ's Love

Ephesians 3:1-21

Lesson 4

1. If you were in prison, what would you miss most about life on the outside? In what ways would you spend your time trying to "escape" (mentally, emotionally, etc.)?
2. Paul likely wrote Ephesians while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30-31). What is the clue that Paul gives regarding his location and condition? (Ephesians 3:1)
3. How did Paul describe his current circumstances? Whose "prisoner" did he say he was? (Ephesians 3:1) What does this say about his ability to deal with negative circumstances?
4. Do you think Paul was looking for sympathy as he wrote this letter (probably from a guarded room)? (3:2-13)
5. On what basis do you have any right to come to God? (3:10-12)
6. With what attitude are you allowed to approach God? (3:12) How does this compare to your normal attitude, actions and feelings about approaching God?
7. Paul soon shifted the focus from what God had done for him to what God could do for his readers. What overwhelming concept or truth was he wanting them to grasp? (3:14-19)
8. Have you fully comprehended what God has done for you and how great Christ's love is? Describe your perspective on His love for you.
9. As a closing for this lesson, read the benediction in Ephesians 3:20-21.

A Study of Ephesians

Unity in the Body of Christ

Ephesians 4:1-16

Lesson 5

1. What unites sports teams? How do sports teams illustrate the need for different gifts, working in unity?
2. What virtues foster unity among Christians? (Ephesians 4:1-3)
3. What are the 7 elements listed by Paul that should motivate us to pursue Christian unity? (4:4-6)
4. How do you get along with other Christians?
5. God has spiritually gifted some Christians to lead as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastor/ teachers. (4:11) What is the purpose of these spiritual gifts? (4:12-13)
6. How have you benefited from the leaders in your church?
7. What does God expect to see as a result of spiritual leaders equipping and mobilizing Christians for ministry in the body of Christ? (4:14-16)
8. What service can you offer within the body of Christ?
9. How would you characterize the unity of your church? What part can you play in your church's unity?

A Study of Ephesians

Living as Children of Light

Ephesians 4:17-5:21

Lesson 6

1. What are the type of things that happen in our city after dark?
2. How did Paul say Gentiles were living in the dark? (Ephesians 4:17-19)
3. *The Put Off - Put On Principle:* Paul lists many vices that Christians are to put off; however, he also lists the virtues that are to be put on in their place. To enjoy long-term change you must focus on the virtue that you are adding. Below, list the vices to put off and the virtues to put on in their place. (4:20-32)

PUT OFF	PUT ON
old self falsehood	new self speak truthfully

4. What virtues have you put on since becoming a Christian?
5. In what way are Christians to imitate God? (5:1-2)
6. What actions does Paul say should not be associated with God's people? (5:3-4)
7. Whom should Christians avoid partnership with? (5:5-7)
8. How does Paul suggest we live? (5:8-21)
9. Instead of yielding control of yourself to alcohol, what power should you yield to? (5:18)
10. What changes would you like to see take place in your behavior? Yield to the power and control of the Holy Spirit. Allow him to help you put on new virtues that will crowd out the old vices. Pray for one another right now.

A Study of Ephesians

Husbands and Wives

Ephesians 5:21-33

Lesson 7

1. Name a couple who have a good marriage relationship and describe what it is that you truly admire about them.

2. How does mutual submission between a husband and wife create a satisfying relationship? (5:21)

3. How does Paul help define the wife's responsibility in this mutual submission? (5:22-24)

4. Paul illustrates that submission in marriage is not one-sided, in fact, the husband is required to take an active role. How does Paul describe the mutual submission of a husband? (5:25-27)

5. How does Paul's teaching here illustrate that God should be at the center of a marriage relationship?

6. What priority should a husband give to loving and caring for his wife? (5:28-30)

7. How should the covenant bond between a husband and wife be more permanent than the relationship of a parent and child? (5:31)

8. How does Paul summarize the responsibilities of the husband and wife as they demonstrate mutual submission? (5:33)

9. If you are married, what can you do this week to demonstrate mutual submission to your spouse? If you are single, how can you use this principle of mutual submission to strengthen or help the relationship of a Christian couple?

A Study of Ephesians

Honor Those In Authority Over You.

Ephesians 6:1-9

Lesson 8

1. If you could relive your childhood, how would you change the way your parents treated you?
2. How is obedience to parents a part of a child's obligation to Christ? (Ephesians 6:1)
3. Read Exodus 20:12. The word "honor" is used in the Old Testament to indicate something that is highly prized, cared for, to show respect for, and to obey. What does it mean to "honor your father and mother" as seen in the above verse and Ephesians 6:2.
4. What did God promise the Israelite children for obeying their parents? (6:2-3)
5. How does God's commandment and promise to children hold true today?
6. How did honoring your parents bring blessing to you?
7. What instruction does God have for Fathers? (6:4)
8. How is the Lord to be the center of parent-child relationships? (6:4)
9. How can a parents avoid exasperating their children?
10. What did Paul have to say regarding slaves and their masters? (6:5-9)
11. How are Paul's instructions to slaves and masters an application of Ephesians 5:21?
12. How can you submit to one another out of reverence for Christ and show honor to those in authority over you this week?

A Study of Ephesians

The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-24

Lesson 9

1. What precautions do police officers take to guard against danger?
2. What precautions did Paul tell the believers to take? (Ephesians 6:11)
3. How did Paul describe the danger that Christians face? (6:11-12)
4. Based on Paul's words, what can you expect to face sooner or later? (6:13)
5. What spiritual battles have you been faced with already in your life as a Christian?
6. Why is it helpful that Paul used a Roman soldier's armor to illustrate the protection available for spiritual warfare?
7. List and describe the pieces of spiritual armor that God instructs Christians to put on. (6:14-18)
8. How would you describe the armor of God in your own words?
9. What mandate does God give all Christians? (6:14)
10. What last piece of armor did Paul tell all Christians to take up? (6:17-18) What is the significance of this piece of armor, how is it different from the other items listed and why is it important?
11. What pieces of armor are you missing or are in poor condition? How can you correct that?

SELF-DISCIPLINE

Self-Discipline

Dare To Discipline Yourself

1. Define self-discipline in your own words.
2. List the area of your life in which you would like to become more disciplined.
3. Read together *I Corinthians 9:24-27* and write down the lessons you learn from this passage.
4. Read *I Corinthians 9:25* in the Living Bible and talk about this principle. Deny the lesser to gain the greater.
 - a. Write down some of the lesser things in your life that you have been spending too much time with.
 - b. Write down the greater things in your life that you need to devote yourself more to.
5. Define self-discipline now in a new, positive way. Some of the synonyms for the word discipline are words like preparation, development, and training.
6. What happens when self-discipline becomes an end to itself? What happens when self-discipline is used as a means to a greater end?
7. Talk about something you have achieved because of applying self-discipline or denying the lesser to gain the greater.
8. How does a personal relationship with Jesus Christ provide motivation?
9. What part does having worthwhile vision or goal have in bringing discipline into one's life?
10. What is the one thing in our nature that can cause us to waste life away?
(*Proverbs 1:4 and Proverbs 13:4*)
11. How does the application of self-discipline help us to overcome this common problem?
12. Read *Galatians 5:22-23*. Here part of the Fruit of the Spirit is listed as self-control. How does the Spirit help us to get the inner discipline we need over the following things?
 - a. Anger
 - b. Moods
 - c. Our body
 - d. Sex drive
 - e. Thought life

Self-Discipline

How To Be Renewed And Restored

1. Share a recent experience of how you have been physically, emotionally or spiritually renewed or restored.
2. How often do we need renewal?
3. What do you find is the greatest “vehicle”, “avenue”, “source”, or “method” of renewal in your life? Why?
4. Read *Psalms 51:10-11*. What is it that initiates renewal in our lives; who is it that does the renewing and on what level does deep renewal take place?
5. Read *Isaiah 40:31*. According to this passage, what is the condition for renewal in your life? What is it that you are going through today for which you can claim this passage and its beautiful promise? Place your name in the place in the place of each pronoun to personalize the promise and read it again.
6. Read *Romans 12:2*. To what is Paul referring when he writes, “the pattern of this world”? What would that mean today in our world? What are some of the results of allowing the world to squeeze us into its mold?
7. What does it mean to renew our mind and how are we to do it?
8. How does spending time daily in prayer and in praise throughout the day renew one’s mind? Share personal experiences.
9. What advantage do we have in our negative world if we choose to follow *Philippians 4:8*?
10. What truth do we learn from *Colossians 3:10* about renewal?
11. Conclude this study by reading *Psalms 23* and discussing/relating to your life personally the various portions of this Psalm from which you today find renewal and restoration.
 - a. “I am...
 - b. “I am...
 - c. “I am...
 - d. “I am...
 - e. “I am...

Self-Discipline

Lessons From A Dead Bird

The story: I saw a dead bird today...laying in my yard outside the window. Its little body, so cold and stiff, was not very inspiring to me. Immediately I took a couple of steps back so I could not see the bird...only the trees and blue sky. It was ten that I realized I did not have to go out and remove the dead bird from my yard. All I needed to do was just ignore it! And that's our lesson for today.

1. Is denial healthy or unhealthy? Give a personal example.
2. What does Jesus' life teach us about pretending we do not have unpleasantness in our lives when we really do have some?
 - a. *Luke 8:46*
 - b. *John 11:35*
 - c. *Matthew 8:1-3*
 - d. *Matthew 26:39*
 - e. *Luke 22:60-62*
3. Why is it a good thing for us to face painful or disappointing part of our life like Jesus did?
4. The key is for us to face "the dead bird" in our life like Jesus did. Let's trace his steps and become more Christlike in our responses.

Step one: Answer the question (*John 5:6*), "Do you want to get well?" Why is it sometimes difficult to accept the responsibility of wellness?

Step Two: Forsake sin, including the sin of refusing to love (*John 5:14*)

Step Three: Patiently expect God to do His work...it is a process (*Philippians 1:6*)

Step Four: Receive the New Hope of *Revelation 21:4*. What does this verse say about "dead birds" that come into our life experience?

5. Are you facing one or more of these "dead birds" in your life right now?
 - _____ A person you avoid.
 - _____ A destructive habit.
 - _____ A situation where you fear failure.

What might be the results if you continue to take two steps back and ignore it?

6. Pray for each other that we can face the disappointments of life with courage and repentance, with patience and hope.

"Facing the truth we fear
can lead us to discover
the truth that sets us free!"

Self-Discipline

One Thing I Do

1. Name one thing you have seen God accomplish in your life in the last ten years. Since the beginning of last year?
2. Is your approach to life more like a...
_____ Pioneer (Pushing ahead, taking risks)
_____ Settler (staying put, being secure)
3. Read *John 17:4* (in context) and discuss this amazing statement of Jesus in His prayer.
 - a. What was finished?
 - b. What would appear unfinished?
4. In this prayer of Jesus, do you sense a hurried spirit? What can we learn from Jesus' life so that we can have that same quality in our daily life?
5. Read now from the Apostle Paul to the *Philippians 3:12-14*. What are the two things that Paul said to do?
6. How has the Lord taught you to "forget what is behind"? In practical ways, how do you do that?
7. How has the Lord taught you to "press toward the prize" (at the same time you are forgetting)?
8. Discuss: "When Satan reminds us of the past, we remind him of the future!"
9. We stand on the threshold of a new year! Why is it so important that the Lord calls us to "chose this day whom you will serve?"
10. Is it possible to write your own record for the new year in advance? Which area do you need God's resources in order to see a big change?

_____ Your personal life	_____ Your ministry
_____ Your family	_____ Your time management
_____ Your relationships	_____ Your influence
_____ Your finances	_____ Your spiritual growth

Self-Discipline

Set The Sail

1. In your own words, what do you think it means to “set the sail?”
2. What mistake did Moses make in his leadership as described in *Numbers 13*? What did he fail to do before he sent the committee to see if the people could enter Canaan land? How did this go against God’s plan and will for the children of Israel?
3. What kind of report did the majority bring back and how did this affect the people and Moses’ ability to lead them?
4. What did God think about the committee’s report and lack of leadership on Moses’ part and the people’s negative complaining? What was the consequence? (*Numbers 14:30-41*)
5. Share an experience where you failed to realize God’s dream in your life because you failed to make this decision and, in faith, move ahead.
6. When Joshua became leader what did he do that was different from Moses? (*Joshua 1:10*)
7. In *Joshua 2* where it tells us that Joshua sent two spies, how did this differ from Moses sending the twelve spies? What important principle do we learn here about leadership? How do you need to apply this to your life?

FIVE THINGS TO DO TO SET THE SAIL THAT WILL LEAD YOU TO REALIZING YOUR DREAMS AND GOALS.

1. Sight the port

- a. Define vision and why does every person need to have a clear-cut vision? (*Proverbs 29:18; Philippians 3:12-13*)
- b. Talk about the difference between being a dreamer and having God’s dream and vision that you are putting into effect.

2. Chart the course

- a. If you fail, what do you plan to do?
- b. What do you learn from these verses? *Proverbs 19:2; Proverbs 27:12; Proverbs 16:20; Proverbs 15:22; and Proverbs 24:3-4*

3. Follow the captain

- a. Who is the Captain/Commander-in-Chief of your life?
- b. In Romans the word “yield” is used repeatedly. How does this word apply to your relationship to Jesus? Share some of the things that you are having to say “yes” to and some of the things that you say “no” to in order to achieve what God wants you to.

4. Move ahead with singleness of purpose

- a. How would you define “singleness of purpose?”
- b. In what ways do you have singleness of purpose in your life?

5. Sail on and on with persistence

- a. Talk about someone you have known that had persistence that paid off.
- b. Who is our greatest example of one who hung in there when the going got tough and achieved what He came to do?

Self-Discipline

Follow The Maintenance Schedule

1. What is your most favorite activity for your “day off?” Has it always been that or only recently?
2. From *Genesis 2:2-3*, what do we learn that God did on the seventh day? Why did He do this? Did He need the rest from strenuous labor? Was He physically fatigued? Or, was there something more He was trying to teach us?

Is there more than labor?

3. What happens to the workaholic; the person who works seven days a week and bypasses God’s plan?
4. What happens to a car that is maintained well with a good maintenance program? What happens to a person who takes the break every week to rest their body, mind and soul?

What happens to the person who does not take the break? What happens to them emotionally? What happens to them physically? What usually happens to them spiritually and in their relationships?

5. What do we learn about the Sabbath from Jesus’ teaching in *Mark 2:23-27*? What does Jesus mean when He says the Sabbath was created for man’s good?
6. How do you think a person should keep the Sabbath in modern times? What brings rest and renewal to you?
7. What is it like out there in the world? What is it like in the spiritual presence of Jesus when we worship together?

List all the advantages that come from the discipline of regularly attending worship services.

Self-Discipline

How To Master Your Moods

1. Define in your own words “depression.”
2. List some of the things that can cause depression in our lives.
3. Does a Christian ever get depressed?
4. Each person can be characterized by one of two mood patterns. The roller coaster mood pattern where he/she is very high and swings very low and the rolling hill pattern where he/she gets a little bit up and a little bit down, but mostly just kind of even. Which mood pattern would you say best characterizes your life?
5. When was the last time you were down and what was the cause of it?
6. How can physical conditions affect the way you feel emotionally?
7. What effect does ill feelings toward another person have on your emotional life? What is the solution to ill emotions? (*I John 1:9*)
8. In the following verses, the Bible reveals some pretty big spiritual giants who suffered some mood swings. Read the passage and identify the person.
 - a. *I Kings 19:4*
 - b. *Job 10:1*
 - c. *Psalms 42:6*
 - d. *Jeremiah 15:10*
9. Why is it important to accept responsibility for your own moods?
10. What is the promise and what is the condition in *Isaiah 40:31*?
11. When people get in a low mood, what do they tend to do with their Christian service? What does *I Corinthians 15:58* say about this?
12. When we are all burdened down what does *Psalms 55:22* tell us to do with it?
13. What is one of the ways to get up when we are down according to *I Thessalonians 5:18*? Have someone share how this has made a difference in their life.
14. When we get down we lose our perspective. How does *Romans 8:28* help us to get our perspective back?
15. One of the ways to get up when you are down is to practice *Philippians 4:4*. What is it?

Read together *Psalms 150*.

Self-Discipline Managing You Life

1. What is different about our community today compared to twenty years ago? Our family life? Our church life?
2. When it seems our life is becoming more and more complex, with increasing numbers of voices calling for our attention, what are we to do?

<input type="checkbox"/> Take a trip	<input type="checkbox"/> Write specific goals
<input type="checkbox"/> Quit!	<input type="checkbox"/> Say "No" to some things
<input type="checkbox"/> Eat pizza	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch TV
<input type="checkbox"/> Pray more	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk
3. Paul's answer is in *Ephesians 5:15-16* (Philips' translation). "Live life...with a due sense of responsibility, not as people who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days."
4. **Fact:** "All of us are given 1440 minutes every day to spend...to invest...any way we want. Time cannot be saved! It must be spent." Discuss how this fact will affect our daily choices.
5. What is the difference between a goal and a purpose? Which comes first? When a goal is written it needs three parts. Discuss each part and the reason why it is important.
 - a. What?
 - b. How?
 - c. When:
6. Write down a **measurable** goal you have in your life.
7. What are we to do when we have more worthy/noble goals than we can possibly do?
8. Read from Solomon's wisdom and make the application to daily life with each one.
 - a. *Proverbs 16:9*
 - b. *Proverbs 19:2*
 - c. *Proverbs 21:5*
 - d. *Proverbs 22:3*
9. Now read the two brief stories Jesus told about the importance of planning ahead.
 - a. *Luke 14:28-30*
 - b. *Luke 14:31-33*
10. From the life of Jesus, how was it possible for Him to have such high demands made on His time and to do it all with an **unhurried spirit**?
11. What adjustments do you need to make in your life in order to invest the time God gives you in a more effective way?

Self-Discipline

Peer Pressure

1. What “bits of wisdom” do you have for children and youth about peer pressure?
2. What are some of the choices we make, which are influenced greatly by the people around us?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
3. How were the choices of people in the Bible influenced by the people around them?
 - a. *Exodus 32:1-6 and 19-24*
 - b. *2 Chronicles 20:2-4 and 13-20*
 - c. *Luke 8:40-42 and 15:6-15*
 - d. *Mark 11:7-11 and 15:6-15*
4. Wisdom from Solomon to help us when the pressure is on.
 - a. *Proverbs 25:28*
 - b. *Proverbs 29:8*
 - c. *Proverbs 14:15, 18*
 - d. *Proverbs 15:22*
 - e. *Proverbs 27:9*
5. What test questions can you ask yourself to know if you are in a healthy or unhealthy relationship?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
6. What can we learn from Jesus’ words in *Matthew 5:37* about peer pressure?
7. Read *Acts 4:19-20*. What principle do Peter and John follow in their defense of the choices they have made?

Find some ways to exercise the teaching of *Hebrews 10:24* in your group after you have defined the word, “spur.”

Self-Discipline

Understand And Discipline Your Anger

1. Do you think Christians ever get mad?
2. Define anger in your own words. Talk about anger as being one of the human emotions.
3. Write down some of the things that cause a person to experience the emotion of anger.
4. What does *Proverbs 16:32*, have to teach us about the importance of learning to control our anger?
 - What about venting your anger on other people?
 - What effect does this have on you?
 - How does it affect the relationship?
 - What does the Bible have to say about it in *Proverbs 29:11*?
5. What about stuffing your anger inside and suppressing it? What does that do for you?

(John Powell says, “When I suppress my emotion, my stomach keeps score.”)
6. Read together *Ephesians 4:20-32* and write down everything that you learn about anger and what we are to do as Christians.
7. When was the last time you experienced anger?
 - How did you handle it?
 - Did you blow up?
 - Did you suppress it?
 - Did you confess it?
8. What caused your anger? At that point did you become aware that you were angry? Before or after the fact?
9. Grade yourself from A to F on the following ways of handling anger. (A = Excellent; B= Very Good; C = Fair; D = Poor; F = Failing)
 - _____ Confess it
 - _____ trace the cause of your anger
 - _____ accept personal responsibility for your anger
 - _____ train yourself to hold your tongue until you cool down
 - _____ work out your aggression a healthy way
 - _____ gain self-control by losing control to the Holy Spirit
 - _____ don't nurse a grudge
 - _____ be open and honest with the other person about what is stirring you up
 - _____ set your spirit free by praying for the person who injured you
10. Have someone share how the Holy Spirit has helped them in their daily life to handle their anger.

A TEN LESSON STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

A Study of Philippians

Spiritual Blessings From God

Philippians 1:1-11

Lesson 1

This letter was written by Paul from prison (more than likely, during his two-year confinement in Rome (Acts 28:30)). Paul also had spent some time in Philippi. Remember how he and Silas had been in jail when God caused an enormous earthquake which broke everyone's chains and busted down the doors? They were then able to lead the jailer to salvation in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:25-34). Paul had some strong feelings for the people in Philippi as you will see.

1. Who are your Christian friends that give you strength and courage in the tough times?

2. Timothy was apparently with Paul when he wrote (Philippians 1:1-2). What emotions did Paul feel as he thought of the Philippian church? Why? (1:3-5)

3. How were the Philippians in partnership with Paul? (1:4-5)

4. Who are those partners in life who will stand with you in difficult times?

5. What was Paul confident about? (1:6)

6. How did Paul's circumstances (being in prison) affect his attitude toward his friends in Philippi? (1:7-8)

7. What was Paul's prayer for the Philippians? (1:9-11) What results did Paul seek?

8. How is Paul's prayer for the Philippians a good prayer for you to copy?

9. Who are those that you are ready to stand beside in their time of trouble?

10. What can you do this week to encourage a brother or sister in their Christian journey?

A Study of Philippians

Peace and Purpose in Prison

Philippians 1:12-30

Lesson 2

1. Paul was a prisoner under "house arrest" while awaiting trial in Rome. What are some of the "prison experiences" (job, finances, family issues, marriage problems, etc.) that you have had or are now experiencing that look like hindrances to the fulfillment of God's plan for your life?
2. How had Paul's imprisonment affected his ministry and the spread of the Gospel? (Philippians 1:12-14)
3. Paul had a purpose that transcended his circumstances. In fact, as long as that objective was met, he rejoiced. What was that purpose? (1:15-18)
4. What purpose or objectives do you wish to see become reality? What results would bring you great joy no matter who received the credit for their accomplishment?
5. Was Paul a spiritual optimist or pessimist? Compare how he viewed the two alternatives before him:
 - a. (1:21) If death, then. . .
 - b. (1:22-26) If life and freedom, then. . .
6. How are you allowing God to help you see the good that can come out of each of the options in your future? How do you struggle with feeling like everything in life has to go according to your plan?
7. How did Paul want believers to live regardless of their circumstances? (1:27-30)
8. What is one of the toughest challenges you have experienced as a Christian who is seeking to "conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?"
9. What can you do this week to encourage another Christian who is seeking to honor Christ in the midst of life's challenges?

A Study of Philippians

Taking on Christ's Attitude

Philippians 2:1-11

Lesson 3

1. When you hear the word "selfishness" what comes to your mind?
2. In Philippians 2:1 the "if" clauses in the original Greek language speak of certainties and could be translated "since." These are speaking of realities, not questionable things. What are the realities Paul lists that Christians possess?
3. In what practical ways did Paul exhort the Philippian people to show the unity which was theirs in Christ? (2:2)
4. How have you seen or experienced these practical demonstrations of love within the body of Christ?
5. How does self-centeredness effect relationships? What did Paul have to say about self-centeredness? (2:3-4)
6. How is Christ our best example of humility and unselfishness? (2:5-8)
7. Christ's focus was not on getting ahead and exalting Himself. However, what did God do as a result of the attitude and actions of Christ? (2:9-11)
8. How does Christ's example of humility and service challenge our natural tendency toward self-centeredness?
9. What steps can you take this week to imitate Christ's example and attitude in your relationships?

A Study of Philippians

Shining Examples for Christ

Philippians 2:12-18

Lesson 4

1. How do people behave differently when one of the following authority figures are present compared to when they are absent: teacher, parent, policeman, employer or supervisor?
2. Paul has just illustrated obedience to God by using Christ as the ultimate example. In light of Christ's obedience what does Paul command the Philippian people to do now that he is absent from them? (Philippians 2:12)
3. Paul says that the Philippian Christians are to "work out" their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12). Does this mean that Christians are to "work for" their salvation? Can we be saved by our works? (Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. Have you ever felt as if you had to "work for" or "earn" your salvation? What have you done to overcome this false idea?
5. What help can Christians count on as they seek to live in a way that pleases God? (2:13)
6. Even though we cannot earn our salvation by what we do, it is still very important how we act and think. What instructions did Paul give for everyday Christian living? (2:14-16)
7. What godly qualities make Christians "shine like stars" in this dark world?
8. How did Paul view his own life? (2:17-18)
9. How does God want to help your life "shine" this week? Where and to whom has He sent you?

A Study of Philippians

The Blessing of Christian Friendships

Philippians 2:19-30

Lesson 5

1. Who was your best friend when you were growing up? What do you look for in a friend now?

2. In this passage of Scripture, Paul writes about two friends that are with him while he awaits trial in Rome; Timothy and Epaphroditus. How does Paul describe Timothy? (Philippians 2:20-24)

3. How does Timothy's life serve as a good example of the challenge that Paul gave to the Philippian people in Philippians 2:2-4?

4. Who would be an example of a "Timothy" in your circle of Christian friends and why do they stand out as an illustration of obedience to Paul's challenge in Philippians 2:2-4?

5. Who was Epaphroditus and why did the Philippians send him to Paul? (2:25)

6. In what ways can you be a "courier" of blessing in God's kingdom?

7. Why did Epaphroditus want to return to see the Philippian people? (2:26)

8. What had happened to Epaphroditus and why were the Philippians to welcome him home with great joy and honor? (2:27-30)

9. This week, how can you look out for the interests of the Lord rather than your own interests?

A Study of Philippians

Where Do You Place Your Confidence?

Philippians 3:1-11

Lesson 6

1. Of all your achievements in life, personal or professional, which one or two stand out to you as most significant?

2. What did Paul ask the believers in Philippi to do? (Philippians 3:1)

3. Evidently there were some false teachers that were trying to influence the Philippian people by suggesting that they follow Jewish law and tradition in order to be an acceptable Christian. These false teachers are often referred to as Judaizers. How did Paul refer to them? (3:2)

4. What three characteristics are true of those that Paul described as "the circumcision," the true believers and followers of Jesus Christ? (3:3)

5. What did Paul list as his Jewish credentials and accomplishments? (3:4-6)

6. How did Paul view his past accomplishments and privileged background in light of his relationship to Jesus Christ? (3:7-8)

7. What hope did Paul have for obtaining a right standing before God? (3:9)

8. What longings and aspirations did Paul declare to the Philippians? (3:10-11)

9. Why should our identity and confidence be in Jesus Christ?

10. Are there things that you are placing your confidence in that should be counted as "rubbish" for the sake of knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection?

A Study of Philippians

Pressing Toward the Goal

Philippians 3:12-4:1

Lesson 7

1. What kind of sports or recreational activities have you competed in or enjoyed during your lifetime?

2. In what ways was Paul's spiritual life like that of a disciplined athlete? (Philippians 12-14)

3. How did Paul call the Philippians to think like him? (3:15-16)

4. How did Paul want believers to act like him? (3:17)

5. What kind of race are you running for Christ? How would you compare yourself to Paul?

6. How did Paul describe God's enemies? (3:18-19)

7. What kind of opposition do you face in living as a Christian?

8. What hope should we Christians have that will hold us steady through the marathon race of life and help us "stand firm in the Lord?" (3:20-4:1)

9. What is the "prize" that Paul is talking about in this passage? (3:14; 20-21)

10. What spiritual workout or training this week will help you run your Christian race and keep you focused on the goal to win the prize for which God has called you?

A Study of Philippians

Maintaining Your Peace

Philippians 4:2-9

Lesson 8

1. As a child, who was the one person in your family that you had the most difficulty getting along with? What were the results of this?

2. Apparently two ladies, Euodia and Syntyche, were the source of a recent (and major) conflict in the church at Philippi. Paul appealed to them publicly to settle their differences (Philippians 4:2-3). What alternative did he suggest rather than squabbling over disagreements? (4:4-5)

3. How do you cope with conflict? Do you attack or withdraw? Fight or flight?

4. In verse 5 Paul states that, "the Lord is near." The return of Christ is the next great event in God's prophetic schedule. How should an awareness of Christ's imminent return affect a person's attitude? (4:5)

5. What did Paul say about being anxious about life's circumstances? (4:6)

6. What did Paul say to do instead of worrying? (4:6-7)

7. What are the eight qualities listed in verse 8 and how would you define each? (4:8)

8. How could these qualities help shape a person's thinking?

9. How successful are you in following these eight qualities? Where do you need the most work in your thought life? What can and will you do about it this week?

A Study of Philippians

Joy in Every Situation

Philippians 4:10-13

Lesson 9

1. When have you been in the greatest need financially?

2. What was this time like, and how do you look back on it now?

3. What situation was Paul in at the time of the writing of this letter?
(Philippians 1:12-14)

4. What was his response to his circumstances? (4:11)

5. How does Paul illustrate the contrast between being in need and having plenty? (4:12)

6. What did Paul claim to be true of himself, no matter what circumstances he found himself in?
(4:12)

7. Did Paul live a fairly comfortable life, or was his contentment tested by challenges and suffering? (2 Corinthians 11:23-29)

8. Paul claimed to know the secret of being content in any and every situation. What does he indicate is that secret of contentment? (4:12-13)

9. What challenges of life are you facing and how can you find strength and contentment through trust in Jesus Christ? How can you apply Philippians 4:13 to your life this week?

A Study of Philippians

Maintaining A Spirit of Contentment

Philippians 4:14-23

Lesson 10

1. Tell about a time when your heart was full of thanksgiving and gratitude for the help that you received from a friend.
2. What were Paul's comments and thoughts regarding the help he received from the believers at Philippi? (Philippians 4:14)
3. How had the Philippians supported Paul in the past? (4:15-16)
4. What was it that Paul wanted for the Philippians? (4:17)
5. What can you do to be ready to help others when they are in need?
6. What was Paul's financial situation? (4:17-18)
7. What was Paul's response to the generosity of the Philippian people? (4:18-19)
8. How did Paul say that God would reward those who had been so generous? (4:19)
9. What can you do to develop an attitude of confident expectation in all circumstances?
10. Whom did Paul wish to receive honor, thanks, and praise? (4:20)
11. Is there someone that God wants you to help this week who is in need of some resource that you can offer?

GOOD AND GODLY ATTITUDES

Good And Godly Attitudes

Attitude Check

Attitude Evaluation Exercise:

Score as follows: (each score shows how often you believe that statement is true for you)

- 0 = not at all true for me
- 1 = somewhat true or only true part of the time
- 2 = fairly true or true about half the time
- 3 = mainly true or true most of the time
- 4 = true all the time

- _____ 1. I am free of negative feelings towards other people.
- _____ 2. I am accepting of decisions persons over me have made.
- _____ 3. I am at ease with people I work with.
- _____ 4. I feel in fellowship with God.
- _____ 5. I feel close to the people in my church.
- _____ 6. I am happy when other people succeed.
- _____ 7. I do not have any bitterness towards another person.
- _____ 8. I have gratitude in my heart because God has been so good to me.
- _____ 9. I am leaving the mistreatment that I have experience in the past by putting it into God's hands.
- _____ 10. I am not passing judgment on anyone else.
- _____ 11. I am willing to let others get the credit.
- _____ 12. I have love in my heart for everyone at work, in my family, and in the church.
- _____ 13. There is no one that I have an unforgiving spirit towards.
- _____ 14. I have a positive attitude towards the leaders in my church.
- _____ 15. At this time I am not being critical of anyone else's lifestyle or Christian faith.
- _____ 16. My primary will is to do God's will in my life. I am willing to do whatever God wants me to do.
- _____ 17. I do not resent the promotion of another. In fact, I rejoice with them.
- _____ 18. I look at what is right more than I look at what is wrong.
- _____ 19. I am not responsible for anyone's attitudes or actions but my own.
- _____ 20. I believe that God is at work bringing good out of evil things that have happened.
- _____ 21. What I do not understand, I am able to turn over to God.
- _____ 22. I want God to bless our church.
- _____ 23. I am open and honest in my dealings and relationships with other people.
- _____ 24. When someone has hurt me I am able to go and talk to him/her about it.
- _____ 25. I do not have to prove other people wrong even when I think I am right.

To find your own attitude evaluation, simply add all scores. The possible range for your attitude index is from 0 to 100. If your attitude is in the mid-90's and up, thank God for your good attitude and keep allowing Him to help you have a good attitude. If your attitude is below 90, then in your daily prayer life you really need to make this a matter of prayer that your attitude will be upgraded. If your attitude is 75 or less, it is a serious handicap to your relationships, ministry and witness for Christ. You may want to talk to a mature Christian about how you can, with God's help, go to work on your attitude to eliminate the negative and become more

wholesome in your attitudes. If your attitude is below 50, then you need to see a pastor for some spiritual counsel.

1. What difference does your attitude make...
 - a. In your family relationships?
 - b. In your church relationships?
 - c. In the way you do your work?
 - d. In your health?

2. What are the results and consequences of a bad attitude? (*Mark 7:14:20*)

3. When our attitude is bad, what are the steps we can take to have a transformed attitude?
(Before beginning these steps, read *Philippians 2:13* and answer this question: Who is it that works within us to continually transform and recreate our attitude?)

Step 1 (*I John 1:9*)

Step 2 (*Matthew 6:14-15*)

Step 3 (*Matthew 5:23-25*)

Step 4 (*Romans 12:19*)

Step 5 (*Romans 12:21*)

4. In the closing part of this lesson practice *James 5:16*. Put a chair in the middle of the circle and ask anyone who needs the power of God to help them change their attitude to come take their turn sitting in the Love Seat. Then lay hands on them as a group and pray for healing, cleansing and transformation of their attitude.

Good And Godly Attitudes

Positive Or Negative: The Choice Is Yours

1. When can you remember your words getting you in trouble? What happened?
2. What do we learn about the importance of speaking positive words from *James 3:9-12*. According to these verses, what kind of words come out of your mouth? If you say something negative about another person, how do you feel?
3. What kind of an atmosphere does speaking positive words create? How does it make you feel? How does it make other people feel?
4. No matter what happens, look for the positive and you will find it. Review the narrative in *Numbers 13-14*.
 - a. Whose decision was it for the children of Israel to move into the promised land of Canaan?
 - b. What was the majority report? Read *Numbers 13:18, 23, 28, 31-32*.
 - c. What did they do that people today still do? What should we never do because when we do it, always defeats us? What kind of thoughts about themselves did they get as a result of doing this? (*Numbers 13:33*)
 - d. In *Chapter 14* we see that the negative leaders infected the people with their negativeness. What else happened? In *Numbers 14:11*, what did God say to Moses? If you were God, how would you feel if your children forgot the wonderful things you had done for them?
 - e. How do you think God feels when we become so negative, complain and forget what He has done?
 - a. As you read the *14th Chapter*, what was the consequence of their centering on the negative?
 - f. Joshua and Caleb gave the minority report. See *Numbers 13:30*. What did they report? And in *Numbers 14:30* what was their result of positive thinking?
5. In the situation that you are in right now, if you are in a nit-picking, negative, destructive cycle, how do you get out of it? Read *Philippians 4:4-8* to see how to take charge of your thought life.
6. When we have negative emotions, how do we keep from surrendering to them?
7. How can we work through them and replace them with positive ones?

For example, with God's help we can replace:

Anger with
Fear with
Complaining with
Guilt with
Feeling sorry for oneself with

Good And Godly Attitudes

Bitter Or Better – The Choice Is Yours

1. Talk about a person you know who has gone through a difficult experience but has come out of it with a better attitude. Also talk about a person who has gone through an emotional hurt and come out of it a bitter person.

What is the difference between these two kinds of people?

2. Discuss this statement: “Keep your heart right, even when it is sorely wounded.”
3. Read *Hebrews 12:14-15*. How does bitterness begin, what does it grow into, and what does it cause?

How is bitterness contagious?

Why is the worst kind of bitterness the kind that we take on towards another person, even though that person has not willfully done anything to us personally?

4. If you were going to tell someone how to prevent bitterness, what would you say?
5. What do we learn about bitterness in *Acts 8:18-25*?
6. In what way is bitterness destructive?
 - a. To health?
 - b. To relationships?
 - c. To our perspective and ability to see clearly?
 - d. To our spiritual relationship with Father God?
7. What is the cure for bitterness? Read *Ephesians 4:29-32*.

Good And Godly Attitudes Healthy Or Sick – The Choice Is Yours

1. Describe a healthy attitude. Describe a sick attitude.
2. List some unhealthy attitudes that are dangerous to your health.
3. A few years ago a Christian writer (Bruce Larson) wrote a book with the title, “There’s A Whole Lot More to Health Than Not Being Sick.” What do you think he means by this title?
4. There is a direct relationship between attitude and health. A new field of research called psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) has discovered hard evidence demonstrating that the brain and the immune system communicate with each other. In other words, sick attitudes lower the immune system. What happens when your immune system has been lowered?
5. Read the story in *2 Kings 5:1-15* and answer this question: Why did the prophet Elisha tell the servant to have Naaman dip in the dirty Jordan river seven times? Along with the disease of leprosy, what else was wrong with this Commander of the Army?
6. Which comes first: the attitude or the action?
7. Are Christians exempt from getting sick in their attitude? How subtle is getting a sick attitude? Are sick attitudes contagious?
8. What is the difference between a healthy church and a sick church? Is a church that causes people to be cynical, harsh, fretful, divisive, full of hate, a healthy church or a sick church?
9. Go through the steps and experience God’s cure for a sick attitude:
 - a. Stop the denial.
 - b. Open up to the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Take responsibility for your own negative attitude and that is a sin. Sin is destructive. A sick attitude is destructive.
 - d. Confess your sick attitude to God and ask for forgiveness. “When you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you, and cleanse you.” (*1 John 1:9*)
 - e. Restitution – go and make it right. If you are at odds with another person, go and ask them to forgive you. Give forgiveness to them. Do not argue about who is right or wrong but simply let forgiveness flow.
 - f. Receive the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, He is your friend. He is with you and He wants to purify your attitudes, cleanse our all the debris, take away all of the bitterness, cynicism, and set you free.
10. Have someone in your group share the sick attitude that they have had and how God has helped them to get healed out of that.

Good And Godly Attitudes

Learning To Be Thankful In All Things

1. Write down four things that you are thankful for.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. What is the teaching of *I Thessalonians 5:18*? What happens when we put this into practice?
3. According to *Psalms 145:1-2*, what is the example we are given by the psalmist as to how and when to give praise to God?
4. *Psalms 145:3*. Define God's greatness as it applies to your own life.
5. According to *Psalms 145:4*, what is it that we are to do with our children and youth of our church? How are you doing this?
6. From *Psalms 145:5-7*, pick out the action words, the verbs. What should our response be to the goodness in our life?
7. In *Psalms 145:10-12*, for what reasons does God reveal His glory, power, and His majesty?
8. In *Psalms 145:13*. Regardless of what uncertainties may surround us in our world, what is the source of our security, our confidence for the future?

Good And Godly Attitudes

Praise To A Personal God

The scene:

The prophet Isaiah is writing these positive words during a very stressful time. He and his people are surrounded by increased wickedness and the coming destruction of foreign nations. Even in the midst of unfavorable circumstances, we too can say with humble boldness, “O Lord, you are my god.” *Isaiah 25:1-5* sounds like a psalm.

1. Isaiah praised God for his **faithfulness**, verse 1.
 - a. What are some of the names of God that continue to encourage you as you worship?
 - b. What are some recent evidences of God’s faithfulness in your life?
 - c. What is one life experience that reminds you of God’s perfect timing?

2. Isaiah praised God for His **power**, *verses 2-3*.
 - a. What is one of your favorite parts of God’s awesome creation?
 - b. Share some personal promises of God’s power such as *Ephesians 3:20; Luke 11:9-10; Philippians 4:19*.
 - c. What need do you have right now where you are trusting God’s power?

3. Isaiah praised God for His **shelter**, *verses 4-5*.
 - a. When you were a child, what/who was your “emotional shelter” when things became stormy?
 - b. What “storm” or “heat of the desert” is affecting you right now?
 - c. How does God want to shelter you? Will you let Him?

PRACTICE THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Choose one or two of these to share with others in your group:

If you were to move to a poor, primitive country, what three things would you most miss from your current life?

If you could relive any part of your life, what part would it be and why?

What are three things you are most thankful for in your life right now?

What are some of the things you do to show your thankfulness?

What person in your life has been the best example of love? Explain how.

Has there been a time in the past year or two when God seemed especially real or close to you? If so, explain.

Good And Godly Attitudes

Attitudes That Lead To Better Health

1. Contrast the following:
 - a. Healthy and unhealthy view of God.
 - b. Healthy and unhealthy view of other people.
 - c. Healthy and unhealthy view of self.
 - d. Healthy and unhealthy view of material things..
 - e. Healthy and unhealthy view of sex.
 - f. Healthy and unhealthy view of church.
 - g. Healthy and unhealthy view of church leadership.
 - h. Healthy and unhealthy view of lay people in ministry.

2. Talk about this statement: “There’s a whole lot more to health than not being sick.”

3. Read *Acts 4:12*. Who is it that came to bring salvation? In what name do we find salvation?
 - What does the word “salvation” here mean?
 - Is it only forgiveness of sin or does it mean more?
 - What is the total plan of redemption that God has for us?
 - What is it that we are to be redeemed from and restored to?

4. Read *Luke 15:11-31*. List the three characters and one word that describes their attitude and then tell if it is healthy or unhealthy.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

5. In *Hebrews 12:15*, what unhealthy attitudes are we warned against? What is the result of this attitude when we allow it to take root within us?

6. How does one change an unhealthy attitude into a healthy one? What is the miracle cure that Jesus came to give to us?

7. In developing a wholeness attitude, what do we need to do? (*Mark 12:3*) How does this affect our attitude?

8. In order to have healthy attitudes, what do we need to feed our minds?

Good And Godly Attitudes

Confidence Without Conceit

1. Describe how a person talks who is lacking in self-confidence. How do you feel when you are around this kind of person? Would you want to follow them as a leader? Do you enjoy being around them? Why?
2. Describe a person who puffs himself up and comes on as being overly confident. How do they talk? How do you relate to this person? How do you feel when you are around them?
3. Is it possible to be over-confident? How does the Bible describe this in *Romans 12:16*? What is it called?
4. What do we learn about confidence from *Hebrews 10:35*?
5. What do we learn about confidence from *Isaiah 30:15 and 32:17*?
6. Who is our perfect example of a person who lived on this earth who had confidence without conceit? Talk about his life and illustrate.
7. Why is it important to distinguish between who you are and what you do? Where does most of your own self-worth come from? “Who you are” or “What you do”? What is the problem when your self-worth comes from what you do?
8. After reading the verses, complete the following “I am’s” and talk about them:
 - a. *Psalms 8:3-5*. I am...
 - b. *Galatians 6:4*. I am...
 - c. *Romans 8:1*. I am...
 - d. *Romans 12:5*. I am...
 - e. *Romans 12:3*. I am...
9. Where does our confidence come from? (*Philippians 4:13*)
10. What is the difference between your self-talk when you say “I can’t” and your self-talk when you say “I can”? Can a person change the way they talk to themselves?
11. According to *Matthew 22:37-39*, two anchors to having confidence without conceit are:
12. Why is it important to help your kids find something in which they excel?

Thought question: Is self-confidence something that comes primarily by keeping after it or does it come as a by-product of living in a right relationship with God and a life of service to others? What do you think?

Good And Godly Attitudes

How To Escape The Swirl Of Selfishness

1. List some things that selfish people do.

2. Where does the swirl of selfishness take us?
 - a. What did David say about himself? (*Psalms 51:3*)

 - b. What did Isaiah say about himself? (*Isaiah 6:5*)

 - c. What did Paul say about himself? (*1 Timothy 1:15*)

 - d. What do you say about yourself?

3. How do we break out of the swirl of selfishness?
 - a. *John 4:34*

 - b. *John 5:30*

 - c. *John 6:38*

4. How did Jesus know the will of God? (*Mark 1:35; 6:46*)

5. How do we know the will of God?

What is our greatest problem – knowing the will of God or doing the will of God?

6. Have someone share an experience when they have struggled with the swirl of selfishness until they let go of it and gave it to God.

Good And Godly Attitudes

The Championship Principle

1. In your own words, finish this sentence: “A person who is dedicated is:

2. What kind of dedication does it take to live the Christian life? (*Mark 8:34-35*)

3. Why is it important to choose what is worthwhile to dedicate our lives to? List those things, which you consider to be more worthwhile and want to dedicate your life to accomplishing.

4. What do we learn about the dedication of Jesus in *Hebrews 12:1-4*?

5. In *Hebrews 12:1*, what does it mean when it says, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles?” How do you apply this to your own life?

6. In *Hebrews 12:2*, what is it that we are to do that makes all the difference?

7. Describe the dedication that is necessary to have a good marriage.

8. Describe the dedication that is necessary to be successful in business.

9. Describe the dedication that is necessary to be successful in Christian living.

10. Do you think self-discipline is positive or negative? Why do you think so?

11. Talk about this statement. “Give God your best and He will do the rest.”

12. Read *Hebrews 12:5, 11* and answer how even hardship can help us win the race.

13. Who is the winner we are following that will lead us to victory?

FOUR LESSONS ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

Dressed For Success

The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-24

Lesson 1

1. If you were to dress for spiritual success, what would you wear?
2. How did Paul tell the believers to dress for spiritual success? (Ephesians 6:11)
3. Why do Christians need to put on the armor of God? (6:11-12)
4. Do Christians really need to stay dressed in the full armor of God all the time? (6:13)
5. Why do you think Paul used the detailed description of a Roman soldier's armor to explain the Christian's defense for spiritual warfare?
6. List and describe the pieces of spiritual armor that God instructs Christians to "put on". (6:14-18)
7. How would you describe the armor of God in your own words?
8. What does God tell all Christians to do? (6:14)
9. What last piece of armor did Paul tell all Christians to take up? (6:17-18) What is the significance of this piece of armor, how is it different from the other items listed and why is it important?
10. What pieces of armor are you missing? How can you correct that?

Dress for Success

Belt, Breastplate and Shoes

Ephesians 6: 14-15

Lesson 2

1. What items of clothing usually attract your attention? Shoes? Shirt? Pants? Skirt? Dress? Belt? etc.
2. What commands do you find in Ephesians 6:10-13?
3. What does Paul say to justify these commands? Why do we need to obey them? (6:10-13)
4. Having said all that he did in Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul shifts from the earlier commands of "put on" to the urgent command, "stand firm" which implies a sense of withstanding or standing "against" evil powers. He begins the "Dress for Success" listing of the full armor of God with the assumption that the Christian soldier has already put on what three items? (6:14-15)
5. Read Isaiah 11:5 and describe the symbolic meaning of the belt of the Messiah.
6. In Ephesians 6:14, "Truth" appears to be symbolic of the believer's character, integrity and faithfulness. Why is it important that our beliefs and convictions line up with God's Word and revelation?
7. The "breastplate of righteousness" refers to moral uprightness of character, strict honesty and conduct that is according to moral principles. The symbolism is used of God in Isaiah 59:17. How is the Christian warrior's character his defense in spiritual battle?
8. Read Isaiah 52:7 describing one bringing good news. These messengers customarily ran barefooted. Here, in Ephesians 6:15, the focus is on standing firm rather than running swiftly. A Roman soldier's sandals had soles thickly studded with nails. How can the gospel provide you with stability and surefootedness as well as "peace" in the midst of spiritual battle?
9. Do you know the Truth of God's Word adequately enough to say that you have moral character or do you question whether or not you are acting with integrity? What can you do to obtain confidence and surefootedness as a Christian?

Dress for Success

Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:16-17

Lesson 3

1. What are some of the most common temptations faced by people in our culture today?
2. Review Ephesians 6:14-15. In addition to the armor listed there, what does Paul tell the Christian soldier to "take up?"
3. In Bible times the soldier was protected from the arrow by his shield because it prevented the arrow from penetrating the body. However, the flaming arrow presented a greater threat because an arrow that had been dipped in pitch could continue to burn. If the shield were to catch on fire the soldier would be forced to cast it aside therefore exposing himself to greater danger. How are Christians exposed to great danger when they cast aside their faith and put their trust in something other than God?
4. The shield suggested here is a large door-shaped shield 2 1/2 feet wide by 4 feet long. Often made of wood, the shield was covered with layers of leather which could be soaked in water before battle in order to put out the flaming arrows of the enemy. What is faith and how is it like this Roman shield?
5. Some of the flaming arrows of our spiritual enemy are temptations toward worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and discouragement. How does faith defend against these attacks?
6. In verses 14-16 there is a mandate or command "to stand" using the belt, breastplate, shoes and shield. In verse 17 the mandate is "to take," meaning "to receive" as from God both the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. What significance, if any, do you see in this second command "to receive" the helmet and sword?
7. The Roman helmet was originally made of leather strengthened with bronze and equipped with cheek pieces. It was a heavy, decorative and expensive item which had an inside lining of felt or sponge and a crest made of horsehair. Only an ax or hammer could pierce a heavy helmet. Here, the "helmet of salvation" refers either to present safety from the devil's attacks or to the "hope of salvation" as a future deliverance. How does Paul use this metaphor of a helmet in 1 Thessalonians 5:8?
8. How does knowing that God provides salvation through Jesus Christ give you protection for daily spiritual battle?
9. How is "doubting your salvation" or attempting to "earn your salvation by works" like a soldier taking off his helmet in the midst of battle?
10. How can you strengthen your "hope" or "assurance" of salvation?

Dress for Success

The Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17

Lesson 4

1. Do you see weapons such as guns, knives and swords as offensive or defensive weapons? Why?
2. The Christian soldier is commanded to receive (take) from God the helmet of salvation and the "Sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God. The major theme of this passage is standing one's ground under spiritual attack (read Ephesians 6:10-13). Can the sword be used to help the Christian soldier stand his ground?
3. The Greek word used in Ephesians 6:17 for "word" is "rhema" which denotes that which is spoken. Rhema (as distinct from logos) in this passage refers not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need (see Matthew 10:19-20). Why is it important to have studied and memorized the Bible in preparation for the spiritual battles of life?
4. Read Matthew 4:1-11, the record of Jesus' spiritual battle with the tempter. What was the first temptation presented to Jesus and how did he respond?
5. When the devil tempted Jesus a second time what did He do to add credibility to His demand? (Matthew 4:6)
6. What role did the scriptures play in Jesus' resisting temptation?
7. Tell about a time when God you "rhema," (individual scriptures which the Spirit brought to mind in a time of need)?
8. Jesus had obviously studied and memorized the Scriptures so that He was prepared for spiritual battle. What other prerequisite had He also fulfilled? (Matthew 3:16; 4:1; Ephesians 5:18; 6:17-18)
9. What can you do to live a life that is yielded to the Holy Spirit and has a firm grasp of the Bible prepared to handle the "Sword of the Spirit" in spiritual conflict?

LESSONS TO LIVE BY

Lessons To Live By

Knowing and Loving God

Isaiah 40:9-31

Lesson 1

1. What are some common opinions about what God is like?
2. Read Isaiah 40:9-14. God's people, even in the Old Testament, have a desire to tell the world about Him (40:9). What is the *good news* about God? (40:10-11)
3. How do Isaiah's questions encourage us to trust God? (12-14)
4. Read verses 15-24. What comfort is there for Israel as they are held captive by the superpower Babylon? (40:15-17)
5. What comfort do you receive from knowing God has power over the nations?
6. How do the idols of the rich and poor compare with the reality of God's power? (40:18-24)
7. What kind of idols do we worship in our culture?
8. Why, for many, does worshipping idols seem preferable to knowing the living God?
9. Read verses 25-31. Some people view God as an uninvolved Creator who stands at a distance to watch His universe. What does verse 26 reveal about God's involvement?
10. Judah complains that God doesn't know what is happening to her (40:27). When have you been tempted to lament that God was unconcerned about your struggles?
11. What hope does Isaiah offer us during such struggles? (40:28-31)
12. Those who know God look to Him for help. How do you need to be renewed and strengthened by God this week?

Lessons To Live By

Seeing The Invisible God

Psalm 19

Lesson 2

1. Think of a close friend. How did your friendship form?
2. Read Psalm 19:1-6. How does the psalmist help you perceive the presence of the invisible God?
3. The psalmist says that creation speaks in every language and in every corner of the world. What can anyone know about God through creation?
(Ps 19:1-6 also Romans 1:20)
4. What aspects of creation have helped you learn the most about God and His glory? Explain.
5. Read Psalms 19:7-14. The psalmist shifts his focus from the way God makes Himself known in creation to the way He reveals Himself in His law. What words does the psalmist use to describe God's law?
6. According to the psalmist, what are the benefits of knowing God's law?
7. What benefits have you received from God's law?
8. What can you learn about God from His law that you can't learn from creation?
9. Why would reflecting on God's creation and His law cause the psalmist David to think about his own responsibility before God? (11-13)
10. How do both nature and God's law bring up the idea of sin and your need of forgiveness?
11. God is a person who is making an effort to be known. What should you be willing to do to know Him better?

Lessons To Live By

Dealing With Anger

Matthew 5:21-24

Lesson 3

1. Why do people seem so angry in today's society?
2. What commandment was Jesus addressing in Matthew 5:21?
See (Exodus 20:13)
3. What was the penalty for violators of this law?
4. How did Jesus interpret the meaning of the law against murder? (5:22)
5. Why did Jesus focus on the emotions behind the violent actions?
6. Read Ephesians 4:26-27. What does Paul have to say about dealing with anger?
7. Compare Exodus 20:15 with Paul's instructions in Ephesians 4:28. What does Paul have to say regarding the issue of stealing?
8. Why did Jesus say you should stop worshipping until you have settled your unfinished business? (5:23-24)
9. Why is it necessary to make things right with people before we come to worship God?
10. Is there an issue of anger, or have you wronged a brother in some way? If so, how can you correct that today?

Lessons To Live By

True Love Waits

1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5

Lesson 4

1. In your opinion, is it more difficult to remain sexually pure in today's society?
2. In 1 Corinthians 6:13, Paul declares that our bodies are not made for sexual immorality. For what are our bodies meant?
3. How does Paul say that sexual sins differ from other sins? (6:18)
4. For Christians, what is unique about their physical bodies? (6:19-20)
5. In 1 Corinthians 7:2 Paul states that each man should have his own wife. Why did Paul make this comment and how does it relate to the commandment given in Exodus 20:14?
6. What obligation does a Christian couple have toward one another? (7:3)
7. When married, to whom does your body belong according to Paul's teaching? (7:4)
8. Under what circumstances may married partners refrain from normal sexual relations? (7:5)
9. Why is it important for husbands and wives to seek to meet the sexual needs of each other? (7:5)
10. God has intended that sexual love be shared only between a husband and a wife, two people who have made a lifetime commitment to one another. What advice would you give to a single young adult regarding his/her sexuality? What advice would you give to a couple who has been married for several years?

Lessons To Live By

The Golden Rule

Luke 6:27-36

Lesson 5

1. If you were to ask 10 of your friends and neighbors to explain the meaning of the "Golden Rule", what would they tell you?
2. What different kinds of mistreatment did Jesus refer to in Luke 6:28-30?
3. What does Jesus mean when He says to "bless those who curse you"? (6:28)
4. The "Golden Rule", as it is called, is found in a negative form in Rabbinic Judaism, and also in Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. It also occurred in various forms in Greek and Roman ethical teaching. The negative form reads, "Don't do to others what you do not want them to do to you". How does Jesus' "Golden Rule" differ in how we should respond to our enemies? (6:31)
5. How does the "Golden Rule" help us keep the commandments listed in Exodus 20:13-17?
6. List the three positive actions about which Jesus asks, ". . . what credit is that to you?" (6:32-34)
7. What results can you expect from God when you practice loving your enemies? (6:35)
8. When we show mercy to our enemies who are we imitating? (6:36)
9. What do you find difficult about the kind of love that Jesus wants us to show?
10. Explain how you can apply the "Golden Rule" in your relationships this week with both friends and enemies?

SMALL GROUP LESSONS ON VARIOUS TOPICS

Love In Action

Luke 10:25-37

1. What motivates people to help someone who is in need?
2. What question did the legal expert ask Jesus in Luke 10:25?
3. When Jesus turned the question back on him how did the legal expert summarize the Law? (Luke 10:26-27)
4. Why did the legal expert ask "Who is my neighbor"? (Luke 10:28-29)
5. How did the priest and the Levite respond when they came upon the man who was robbed and beaten? (Luke 10:31-32)
6. What is significant about including a Samaritan in this story? And how did his actions contrast those of the Jewish leaders? (10:33-35)
7. Why is it easy to relate to the priest and Levite even though the Samaritan showed the best response?
8. How did the legal expert define "neighbor" after hearing Jesus' story? What did Jesus then tell him to do? (Luke 10:36-37)
9. Who are some of those to whom you can, and should, demonstrate "love in action"?
10. Who has helped you in a time of need and how can you express thanks to them this week?

The Second Coming of Christ

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

1. How do you react when you hear predictions about the end of the world?
2. The early Christians were eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus. What related issue was Paul addressing in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14?
3. What hope do Christians have regarding death?
4. What was the authority and basis of Paul's teaching about death and Christ's return? (4:15)
5. What events will happen at the Lord's return? (4:16-17)
6. When and how will the Lord return? (5:1-3)
7. How does Paul instruct us to stay ready for the Lord's return? (5:4-8)
8. How did Paul offer assurance of salvation for both those living and those who have already died? (5:9-10)
9. How does the promise of Christ's return affect the way you live day to day?
10. How should a Christian use Paul's teaching on the coming of the Lord? (5:11)
11. What can you do this week to ready yourself for Christ's return?

For God and Country

Romans 13:1-7

1. What are some things that you are thankful for regarding your country?
2. How is God involved in the establishment of government? (Romans 13:1)
3. What attitude may a Christian show toward God when he or she rebels against the government? How does rebellion against governing authority relate to abidance to God? (13:2)
4. What should a Christian do to maintain a proper relationship with civil government? (Romans 13:3-4, Titus 3:1-2)
5. Why has God created governing rulers? (13:4)
6. What motivation should a Christian have for submitting to governing authorities? (Romans 13:5, 1 Peter 2:13-17)
7. How does Paul describe governmental authorities in Romans 13:6?
8. In addition to taxes, what else could a Christian owe people in authority? (13:7)
9. Under what circumstances might Christians disobey a command from government authority?
10. What positive support should Christians give to government leaders? (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
11. Pray for your national, state and local public official now and throughout this week.

Christianity: A Relationship, Not a Religion

John 8:31-36

1. What sort of things enslave people today?
2. What does it mean to you to be free or enslaved?
3. How does one become a slave to sin? (John 8:34)
4. What does Jesus say that embracing the truth would do? (8:31-32)
5. What does Jesus say about Himself in John 14:6?
6. How does Jesus distinguish between one who is a slave to sin and a spiritual son who is free? (8:35)
7. How do we become sons of God? (John 1:12-13)
8. From what sins have you been set free by Jesus?
9. Are there any habits hindering your witness from which you would like to be free?
10. What step toward freedom has Jesus shown you that you can take this week?

Making Faith Decisions

Numbers 13

1. What happens when you bring the problem solving phase into the decision-making phase?
2. Share an experience where you failed to realize a dream in your life because you failed to make the decision and move ahead in faith.
3. What did God ask Moses to do in preparation to conquer the promised land? (Numbers 13:1-3)
4. How did Moses instruct the spies in Numbers 13:17-20?
5. What kind of report did the majority bring back and how did this affect the people? (Numbers 13:26-33)
6. How did their report and advice go against God's plan and will for the children of Israel? (Numbers 13:1-2)
7. What did God think about the majority report, Moses' lack of leadership and the people's negative complaining? (Numbers 14:30-41)
8. When Joshua became the leader what did he do that was different from Moses? (Joshua 1:10-11)
9. How did the work of Joshua's two spies differ from the 12 spies that Moses sent in?
10. What decisions are you facing that require great faith and trust in God?
11. Are you willing to ask Him what He wants you to do and decide to do it even though you don't know how to solve the related problems?

Expressing Thankfulness

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

1. List several things that you are thankful for.
2. According to Ephesians 5:20, how often are we to give thanks?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. List three things that we are to do that will help us be overcomers.
4. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, does it say to thank God "for everything" or "in everything?" What difference does this make?
5. What circumstances are you now going through which are difficult for you?
6. How can you or have you been expressing thanksgiving to God even during these difficulties?
7. Read Luke 17:11-19. How did it effect Jesus when nine of the men healed never returned to say, "thank you?"
8. What "thank you's" have gone unspoken to God in your life? What will you say or do to demonstrate your gratitude to Him?
9. What "thank you's" need to be expressed to other people who have been kind or helpful to you?
10. How will you express your gratitude to them this week?

Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

1. In your own words, define forgiveness.
2. In what way does an unforgiving spirit hurt you more than it hurts anyone else?
3. Why did Jesus teach us to pray these words, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"? (Matthew 6:12)
4. According to Matthew 18:21, how many times are we to forgive someone who has sinned against us?
5. Study the Parable of the two debtors in Matthew 18:22-35. What is the one central teaching that we can apply in our lives?
6. What are some excuses that you have heard for not forgiving someone?
7. Who is our great example of forgiveness? Read Ephesians 4:32 and Galatians 3:13.
8. Who is someone that you need to forgive with God's help? Write their name below and ask God to help you live out your forgiveness this week.

Becoming Great In God's Kingdom

Matthew 20:20-27

1. When you were a child what did you want to be when you grew up?
2. How did Mrs. Zebedee feel about her two sons? (Matthew 20:20-27)
3. What request did she make to Jesus? (20:21)
4. How did the other ten disciples react to her request? (20:24)
5. What did Jesus say to her? (20:22-23)
6. According to Jesus' teaching and example, what difference is there between the world's system of how one becomes great and God's system of evaluation? (Matthew 20:25-28)
7. List the opportunities in your life that you have for serving others.
8. Give examples of serving in the home.
9. Give examples of serving in God's Kingdom.
10. Give examples of serving in the community and work place.
11. How and where is God leading you to serve at this time in your life?

Mountain Moving Faith

Matthew 17:14-20

1. If you could move any mountain in your life, which one would it be? Where would you move it?
2. Read Matthew 17:20. How big is a mustard seed?
3. What is Jesus trying to communicate to His disciples?
4. Which is more important, the size of my faith or the object of my faith?
5. What is the context or story that preceded Jesus' comments on "mountain moving" faith? (17:14-20) What was the problem?
6. How did Jesus respond to the Father? to His disciples? to the demons?
7. What can we learn from the father whose son could not be healed by the disciples? What would have happened if he had given up? What did he do?
8. Is there a mountain in your life that hasn't moved even though you've tried your best?
9. What could you do next to demonstrate that you are not giving up?
10. Allow others to pray with you about that mountain today.

Why Worry When You Can Pray?

1. Tell about a time when you worried about something that could have gone wrong but didn't?
2. Describe the feeling you have when you've just received word that unexpected company will soon arrive?
3. Read Luke 10:38-41. Whom are you more like; Mary or Martha?
4. What point is Jesus trying to make to Martha?
5. Read Luke 12:22-31. What does Jesus teach us concerning worry?
6. What causes you the greatest amount of worry?
7. How do the commands and principles in Luke 12:31-34 help us to overcome worry?
8. God does not want us to be burdened down by worry and anxiety. What does God say you should do when faced with these temptations?
(Philippians 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:7)
9. Pray "thanksgiving prayers" together by "presenting your requests to God" and "casting your anxiety on Him".

Obedience To Christ

Romans 6:13

1. Jesus is Lord over all things and worthy of our submission and obedience. (Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-13) What does it mean to obey Jesus Christ?
2. What will happen to those who call Jesus their Lord but do not do what He has commanded? (Luke 6:46-49)
3. Before becoming a follower of Christ, sin had control in your life. What should be your present relationship to sin? (Romans 6:11-12)
4. What does Romans 6:13 state you **must not** do?
5. What does Romans 6:13 state you **should** do?
6. In Romans 12:1, 2 how does Paul challenge Christians to live?
7. How did the Apostle John challenge Christians to live? (1 John 2:1-6)
8. What challenge does Peter present? (1 Peter 1:14-16)
9. Write down one thing you know God has revealed to you that He wants you to do in obedience to Him.
10. Is this in line with the truths of God's Holy Word, the Bible?
11. Seek to accomplish this one item of obedience. Make it your number one goal at this time in your Christian life. What will you do this week in order to obey God?

Turning Brokenness Into Blessing

1 Peter 5:5-10

1. When have you experienced brokenness?
2. What benefits can come from being broken?
3. Read 1 Peter 5:5-10. Who does God oppose and to whom does He give His grace and help?
4. If you humble yourself during hard times and submit to God's leadership in your life, what will He do? (5:6-7)
5. Who is the real enemy that is seeking to destroy us? (5: 8-9)
6. What benefits can we look forward to after coming through a hard time? (5:10)
7. Can you tell about someone who has gone through brokenness and turned that experience into a blessing for others?
8. Read Genesis 50:15-21. Consider the life of Joseph. What brokenness did he experience and how did he allow God to turn it into a blessing?
9. Talk about the difficulties you are going through and pray for each other.

Unexpected Guests

Mark 6:30-44

1. Who are some of the "unexpected guests" that God has allowed to enter your life and how have you responded to them?
2. Is it easy or difficult for you to adjust your schedule to meet the needs of others (children, spouse, neighbors, friends or the needy)?
3. Read Mark 6:30-32. What were Jesus and the disciples needing and what had Jesus suggested in order to meet that need?
4. How did Jesus respond to His "unexpected guests"? (6:33-44)
5. Read Matthew 5:13-16. When have you been "salty" enough to make another person "thirsty" for Jesus?
6. Do people indicate that they might want what you have found as a Christian?
7. Describe the difference between conversations that are "seasoned with the love of Jesus" and those that are "soured with complaints and criticisms"?
8. Sometimes God's "unexpected guests" for us are already part of our lives. What could you do this week that would help your "light shine" at home, work, school or in your neighborhood?

Good & Godly Advice

Colossians 2:6-23

1. What are some examples of bad advice you have received?
2. What good advice have you never forgotten?
3. How did Paul tell these Christians to live their lives? (Colossians 2:6-7)
4. What does God give to Christians? (2:9-10)
5. From what did Christ deliver us and how did He do it? (2:13-17)
6. What are some "additional regulations" or "religious rules" that you have personally encountered?
7. How are we instructed to identify false teachers? (2:18-19)
8. How are we to respond to false religious regulations? (2:20-23)
9. What are the fundamentals of your faith that help you stay on track in your Christian life?
9. What good and Godly advice will you share with a new or growing Christian this week that will help them keep strong in his/her faith?

Taking Hold Of Tomorrow

1. What are some ways God gives us a fresh new beginning?
2. Write down the area(s) in your life where you need a new beginning.

Pray-together right now for another's new beginnings.

3. The Book of Joshua tells how to reach out and expand our boundaries and to take hold of what God has for us. In Hebrew, "Joshua" is the same name as Jesus: God saves. Thus, by name, Joshua is a prophetic figure. Just as He led the people into possessing their inheritance, so Jesus has come to bring us to ours.
4. Read *Joshua 1:1-5*.
 - a. What was God's promise to the people?
 - b. What was their part in this conquest?
5. Talk about this statement: "Your future is as great as the promises of God and your vision to possess those promises."
6. Discuss: "Promised blessings do not merely tumble into our laps like overripe fruit... if we would possess all that God intends for us, we can expect that we will engage at times in spiritual warfare."

What obstacles can you expect to encounter in possessing your promised land?

7. Read together *Joshua 1:6-9*. What do you think it means to be courageous and strong in the Lord?

The original language carries with it this thought: "Don't let go! Once you lay hold of God's promise, hold on!" How does holding onto the dream give you strength and courage?

8. Read *Joshua 1:8*. If we _____, then God promises to
9. Read *Joshua 1:10-11*. What was Joshua's response to what God was asking him to do? What is your response to what God is asking you to do in the new year?

10. What is it that we have to do before we see God move miraculously to make things happen?

What are you trying to accomplish for the Lord that you cannot do without His miraculous help?

Where Is Jesus Now?

1. Do you sometimes feel separated from God and His love?
2. Tell about a recent experience when it was difficult to pray and to know that God was with you.
3. Read *Lamentations 3:21:26* from the Living Bible. How can we be certain of God's faithfulness and loving kindness when we don't fully understand it or feel it?
4. What are the things we are to do according to *Lamentations 3:24-15*?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. Explain how God can say of Himself, "**I AM**", and how can we also make a positive confession that He is always **present**?
6. We know that Jesus came to be born as a man, suffered and died and rose again. Discuss how He perfectly illustrates for us the word com-**passion**.
7. Read these few verses.
 - a. *Hebrews 4:15*
 - b. *Hebrews 5:7-8*
 - c. *Hebrews 12:2-4*
 - d. What is the message the writer wants us to receive in these verses?
8. Before Jesus died He told His disciples that He was going away (*John 16:5*) but also that He would be with them always (*Matthew 28:20*). Double-talk? Read *Hebrews 10:12* and answer this big question, "**Where is Jesus now?**"
9. Imagine now Father God and His Son, Jesus, seated together when you pray. Hear Jesus say to His Father, "Abba Father, look at what He/She is going through and it feels like this..."
10. What is the hardest thing you are going through right now?
11. What have you learned from difficult times in the past? What could be the benefits in this situation?

Taking Time To Remember

1. Name one significant PLACE your parents have told you about many times.

Name one significant PLACE in your childhood memories.

2. Read *Joshua 4:1-8*. What was the purpose of the memorial stones?

Why do people need memorials?

3. Christians have memorials, too! Every time we share of the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper, what should we be remembering?

4. We also have individual memories of God's deliverance and love, the times He performed the impossible for us. How do our past experiences help us in our future challenges?

5. Over the years, Christians have built many monuments out of stone and glass to speak of His greatness. For example, think of the great cathedrals in Europe. But as great as these feats are, there is only one kind of monument that God desires... the living memorial of a dedicated, Spirit-filled Christian.

*Is my life a memorial to God's greatness?

*Are other people attracted or repelled by what they see in me?

*What kind of visible memorial is left if these qualities are absent?

6. Answer these questions thoughtfully and prayerfully as you discuss these verses as a group:

- a. *1 Samuel 15:22*
- b. *Psalms 100:4,5*
- c. *John 13:35*
- d. *Romans 6:11-14*
- e. *Philippians 2:3,4*
- f. *Philippians 2:15*

In the Old Testament, God used inanimate objects as memorials, i.e., stones, arks, temples. Today He uses flesh and blood as His witness to the world. How is God's program helped or hindered by our memorial efforts?

John: The Rugged Individual

1. Describe a “sign” you have been given to help convince you that a person is the right one, i.e., marriage, employment, and investment.
2. Read the narrative in *Luke 7:18-28*. Draw a character sketch of John, using *Verses 24-28*.
3. John was convinced about God’s call on his life and about the message he boldly proclaimed, and yet he does have some lingering doubts. Does that surprise you?
4. It is “easy” to be a person of conviction in today’s society? Why?

What are the benefits of a life lived according to God-given conviction?

5. What was the ministry of the prophet in Israel?

In *verse 26*, what does Jesus mean when He says John was more than a prophet?

6. *Verse 28* tells us something about our position as believers in the body of Christ. What is it?

How can a lowly member of the body of Christ have a greater stature than John the Baptist?

7. John the Baptist was received by which group? (*Luke 7:29*) Rejected by which group? (*Luke 7:30*) NOTE: To reject John’s baptism was to reject what?
8. Jesus compared the Pharisees to self-willed and self-centered children. (*Luke 7:31-35*) Why?