

LEADER'S NOTES



THE POWER OF ONE

AN 8-WEEK GROUP STUDY



THE POWER OF ONE
LEADER'S NOTES

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Please remember these notes are to refer back to if you NEED to. They are a supplement to the discussion. The goal is not to get to the answers provided below but to engage in open and honest discussions. Please give adequate time for group members to respond to the questions before referring to these notes.

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SESSION ONE

THE JUDGE AND HER CALLING

4 *When it comes to flying a plane or leading a Life Group, the takeoff is very important. One of your main goals as a Life Group leader is to create an environment where people feel safe to openly and honestly share their true opinions and answers. It has often been said, “your group will only go as deep as the leader.” It is our hope and prayer that your Life Group would not only be a safe place, but that people would be transparent and go deep when it comes to answering the questions. Therefore, the best way to cultivate this atmosphere in your group is to lead the way in those three areas.*

Because this is the first week of the series, you may have to start the conversation by being the first to answer the questions. This is especially true when it comes to the personal, introspective questions. Remember to be encouraging when others answer and at all costs fight the urge to give hasty advice or quick fixes. We believe that God, through your group, His word, and ultimately His Holy Spirit, will guide and correct people.

Have a great group!

As you begin your group discussion, take some time to talk about some interesting points that your group members picked up from watching the lesson. This is a good time to discuss something that was mentioned in the teaching or testimony that may not be discussed within the questions of the lesson.

1 Deborah was one of God’s servants in a time when no one was fully leading Israel. Her job was to, on God’s behalf, share wisdom with the people, and give Barak the order to lead. Although Deborah could’ve led, she deferred to Barak in compliance to obedience to God first and foremost.

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2 Your Life Group may give different answers to this question and that is okay! Barak may have wanted Deborah to accompany him because he knew Deborah was a great/influential leader who was a servant of God! Barak knew that Deborah could lead, and he may have wanted someone with the confidence to lead and direct in the best way possible.

Barak could've felt inadequate to lead or that Deborah possessed leadership qualities that he did not have. He may have not trusted in God enough to follow through with the plan alone as he realized that he didn't possess what he needed in order to be an influential leader.

5

3 The folks in your Life Group are going to share different stories about this question. Once you ask the question, give your group time to process. It may help kick start your group members if you are transparent and honest in your sharing. Be careful to allow everyone a chance to share, but your openness may be encouragement that your group needs to share their own doubts and hesitations.

4 Deborah's source of confidence comes from being a servant of the Lord. It can come from being someone who follows God's will and trusts God to go ahead and do the work God would have be done.

If each of us possessed Deborah's confidence in the Lord, then we could see great spiritual growth, trust, and an exercise in trusting God through all of life's circumstances.

5 Some of the qualifications Deborah possessed were: trust, obedience, courage, humility, and faithfulness

These qualifications are important because if we were to follow God's guidance and the Holy Spirit's leading with these qualifications, then we could see amazing, God-filled things occur in every believer's life!

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6 The folks in your Life Group will have different people in mind to share about. Give them the time to share about these people! Ask them about the person's impact in the Kingdom of God and follow up that question with "How has this person inspired you, to make a difference in the Kingdom of God?" This conversation may happen naturally in this question so be attentive to the direction the question goes in!

6 7 Barak may have felt intimidated by his call to action. He may have questioned why he was chosen. He may have doubted his own ability to lead. Barak may have had a problem with Deborah's instructions to him because he may not have been ready to take on such a grand endeavor. His pride may have slid into his perspective and he may have not liked that a woman giving him instructions even though she was giving him a word from God.

8 Your Life Group members can answer this question in so many words. Remember that your Life Group is a safe place to discuss insecurities and although it is week one, some may feel the need to open up completely and discuss such a powerful question/prompt. Give your group members time to share. Be attentive to any group member trying to give a simple solution or a quick fix to whatever is shared. It can be your prayer at the end of the night to desire to be a servant like Deborah! Someone who obeyed God and was God's servant and who led with obedience and trust in the Lord!

9 This can be a very sensitive time for you and your Life Group as your group members can open up more and seek prayer for them to live like Deborah. Deborah was a courageous, servant of God and your prayers in your Life Group can be the first steps for someone living more like Deborah. They can also be words of affirmation for someone wanting to continue living like Deborah!

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Deeper Study Questions

10 Jael possessed discernment to the situation. It was not right that Sisera would approach Jael's tent without her husband being around. Then to ask for shelter. It was extremely out of the ordinary for such a leader to make such a request. God used Jael's "woman's intuition" to sense that something great was amiss. Jael also came to an understanding that the enemy of God's chosen people were led by the man who laid in her tent. Jael also had physical tools at hand that she knew how to use. She did not try to wield a sword or another such weapon. She used what she knew to accomplish her task. God's purpose was for Sisera and his people to succumb to Deborah and Barak, and it was so with the help of Jael.

7

11 God used someone who was receptive and understanding to the events surrounding her to carry out a tough task. If we all had an understanding and perception like Jael's, we could all see great steps in our spiritual growth taken!

12 This is a great question for those in your Life Group to participate in! Everyone in your group can have something to share and everyone in your group may have never thought about something like this! Give your group members time to share and ask questions to your group about what "spike in the ground" experience has been a turning point in their lives.

13 This story teaches us that God wants humble and obedient servants who are willing to carry out His will. God wants folks who are going to live a life of obedience and humility so that the Kingdom of God expands. God wants folks with Deborah and Jael's fervor and obedience, whether men or women, to see His will be carried out among the nations!

SESSION TWO

THE BOY AND HIS LUNCH BOX

Please remember these notes are to refer back to if NEEDED. They are a supplement to the discussion. The goal is not to get to the answers provided below but to engage in open and honest discussions. Please give adequate time for group members to respond to the questions before referring to these notes.

8

Take some time right after the group watches the video, to discuss what your different group members thought were the highlights of the teaching and testimony for them. There are absolutely no right or wrong answers here, but there is an opportunity to discuss some things that were important to some and maybe missed by others.

1 For some, they may believe that the miracle is recorded in all four gospels because it is an important miracle to take note of. Let your group members share why they think this miracle is recorded in all four gospels!

2 The crowd followed Jesus because they knew they could get something from Jesus that would nourish and heal them physically. They expected Jesus to perform miraculous things for them.

3 Philip answered by saying in Verse 7: “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” Andrew replied with “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” (NIV).

The folks in your Life Group may have different responses to the second question. Give your group time to talk. Give them time to be imaginative and encourage them to answer the question honestly. Sometimes, being honest to questions such as this one can be healing and revealing for group members!

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4 Jesus may have asked this question to simply hear what the disciples had to say. Although He is Jesus, 100% man and 100% God, and He has great power to know an abundance of information, Jesus may have simply asked to dialogue with His disciples and use this moment to show His divine power as well as teach His disciples that we are to trust in Him!

5 We have all responded differently to His leading, prompting, and teachings. As it pertains to being tested by Jesus, it can at times, be how we handle a lesson He teaches in the Bible and how we use that lesson in everyday life. Whether it be a quarrel with enemies or sexual temptation. Jesus' life is a mirror for us to look at our life and how Jesus lived can be a test of how we interact with others. So, with your Life Group, discuss how you've been tested by Jesus' life and lessons in everyday life! Everyone can approach such a question from different perspectives.

9

6 The folks in your Life Group are going to have different responses to this question/prompt. Some will have a praise report to share about how God stretched their limited resources while others will share about how they're currently struggling with their resources. This is a great time to remind your group members that God is in control of all things and that through God, all things are possible (Luke 1:37). For those whose experience deepened their faith in God, give them time to share how God grew them and stretched them personally. Don't give them the space to preach a sermon but to share testimony on how God works powerfully.

7 Once again, the folks in your Life Group are going to have different responses to this question/prompt. Both of these questions can cause for great conversation. By giving your group members time to answer such questions, they can reveal to themselves by their own conversation how God can work with their resources! God can use your resources, as limited as they could be, to still bless men and women who are in your life!

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8 This can be a tough question to process and study in your time together. It is a very real question that can be safely discussed in your Life Group. Remember that your group time isn't a time to offer up any quick fixes but it is to discuss the questions at hand. Some people in your Life Group will come with testimony on how they were able to entrust God with their limited resources while others will share the opposite. One of your prayers at the end of the night can simply be: "Father God, I pray that we as a Life Group approach you with trust and confidence that you will take care of us, your creation. I pray that we trust you with everything we have. You've given it to us and may we offer it back up to you as a sacrifice of our devotion to you. Amen."

9 John may have been trying to communicate that if God shows up to provide, He shows up in big ways and provides so much that there are even leftovers. Jesus left His mark on this miracle in many different ways but leftover food for the disciples to see and believe in how He worked was a big mark on how the Trinity can work and provide!

10 Like mentioned in question number 8, one can pray these words as they close their Life Group session for the night: "Father God, I pray that we as a Life Group approach You with trust and confidence that You will take care of us, Your creation. I pray that we trust You with everything we have. You've given it to us and may we offer it back up to You as a sacrifice of our devotion to You. Amen."

Deeper Study Questions

11 These stories share the commonality of men and women who had something that God was able to masterfully multiply. Although we see that one of the stories in this collection of Bible passages is a parable, we see that there needs to be trust unto God and His provision for God to multiply how He sees fit. Two of the stories had folks who were not necessarily rich and yet, God saw their faith and recognized their faith!

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12 God may be trying to show us how He works so powerfully in the lives of men and women who step out in faith and trust God with their resources. God is trying to show us through the Bible stories that there are people who struggle with giving unto God what He deserves, but if we have faith, then God can multiply what we have in order to be glorified and in order to provide for us, His creation.

13 Give your group members time to share and discuss when they faced an impossible situation. Ask them “How did you feel in those moments?” or “What did you think was going to be the outcome?” to get them to open up a bit more. Don’t force anyone to speak. Simply let the conversation take its course. If you notice no one speaking, that is okay. This may be a tough question for some to answer. The group may be encouraged to hear about your experiences. Be open with them as you share. Allow them to see that it is okay and expected to not be perfect in life, and to be surprised by what God does in and through you as you give things over to Him. 11

14 This verse is tucked away in the middle of Jesus’ famous, Sermon on the Mount. This verse is Jesus directly referring to His heavenly father and letting the people in His midst know that God the Father will take care of us!

SESSION THREE

THE CAPTAIN AND HIS SHIP

Please remember these notes are to refer back to if NEEDED. They are a supplement to the discussion. The goal is not to get to the answers provided below but to engage in open and honest discussions. Please give adequate time for group members to respond to the questions before referring to these notes.

12

Take some time right after the group watches the video, to discuss what your different group members thought were the highlights of the teaching and testimony for them. There are absolutely no right or wrong answers here, but there is an opportunity to discuss some things that were important to some and maybe missed by others.

1 The problem with mankind was that the human race was wicked and that every inclination of man was evil all the time.

Noah was different in that he found favor in the eyes of the Lord due to him being blameless and walking faithfully with God.

2 Grief can be defined as deep sorrow, a keen mental suffering or distress over affliction or loss. Based on what these verses say, God was grieved over His creation that had strayed from Him and become inherently evil.

3 The folks in your Life Group will have different answers to this question. Encourage them to share their honest thoughts about this question. If you hear someone say, “No way! I could ever do that!”, don’t allow someone else in your group to try and fix their response. Ask follow up questions such as “Why do you think you couldn’t carry out God’s instructions like Noah did?” or “What from Noah’s life, inspires you to carry out such big and intimidating instructions from God?”

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4 Give your group members the time to talk about their experiences with God's requests upon their lives! Don't let this time become "How God is doing more amazing things in my life than in yours." Let this time be a time of sharing how faithful God is in all of our lives and how He works in wondrous and mysterious ways!

5 Noah said "yes" to God because of his proximity to God. Because Noah walked faithfully with God, Noah probably felt an assurance and peace about what God was asking of him to do. Noah was told by God in Genesis 6:13-14 that "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them... So, make yourself an ark of cypress wood..." God revealed His plan to Noah, and out of obedience and reverence to God, he then carried out the work that was needed to be done! 13

6 To walk faithfully with God may mean to follow the guidance and love that God, the Father, lavishes upon His creation. It may mean to follow the commands/teachings/life examples of Jesus so that you can bear witness to the world of who God is and to remain connected to the vine and the vinedresser. It may mean to cast anxiety on God and submit to God's guidance and love. Here are some thoughts on walking faithfully with God. Give your group time to share their responses and their thoughts. Through their conversation, they can inspire each other to walk faithfully with God.

7 Your group members will share about different people in their lives who inspire them to walk faithfully with God. Ask, "How is their life different from others you know?" and "Is there anything about their life that inspires you to walk faithfully with God?" Get them to open up about the person they're thinking about so as to not end this question with a name and one thing that inspires them but instead, many things that can inspire more conversation.

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8 The more we walk with God and the more faithfully we walk alongside God through hardships and trials, the more God can transform us to do amazing things for God's kingdom. God's kingdom is anywhere His love, peace, mercy, grace, and kindness reigns. As we walk with God and are transformed by Him, we can find ourselves distributing the characteristics mentioned above.

14 9 Everyone in your group has a next step to reach a new plane of humility and faithfulness. Listen to the prayer requests of your group and write them down so you can continually pray for them to have humility and faithfulness in them walking with God.

Deeper Study Questions

10 Your group members will have different responses to this question. Give them time to think about the one specific thing. When they share it, encourage your group to listen and see to that no one judges what is being shared. We are all on a different journey with God.

11 Only God knows a person's true heart. But their actions of love for others is a great indication as to their true heart. How someone interacts in ministry is a telling sign to how God is working in their lives.

12 For some people, this will be a brand-new thought/concept for them to explore and think about. Others may be familiar with this thought/concept. God works towards redemption and restoration and God sought to restore the creation He created by even means that are heart-breaking.

13 The folks in your Life Group will share different thoughts and opinions on this question. Lead them towards the thought that God is both just and merciful and that His will is for justice to reign supreme all

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while showing mercy to anyone and everyone. God is capable of showing both with zero bias.

14 Everyone has a next step they can take. Encourage everyone to think about what step they need to take and have them write it down in their study guide. Pray for your group to take the next step they need to take so that they can continually walk with God day after day!

15

SESSION FOUR

THE DAUGHTER AND HER BASKET

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16

Take some time right after the group watches the video, to discuss what your different group members thought were the highlights of the teaching and testimony for them. There are absolutely no right or wrong answers here, but there is an opportunity to discuss some things that were important to some and maybe missed by others.

1 It seems that Pharaoh's daughter felt sorry for the baby, and as an act of compassion, risked taking him in. Without being given the whole story of how she was able to keep the baby hidden, we are left to speculate that she was able to have Moses' mother nurse him and care for him until he was older. Then somehow, she was able to give him back to Pharaoh's daughter, in order to make him her son.

2 Here are some suggestions to move you in the right direction. Take for example the foster care system in this country. Statistics show that if one family from every church in America, adopted one child in foster care, we could eradicate the foster care system overnight. Another way we can practically help out children in need, is by partnering with fosterlovela.org. This organization takes donations for nearly all ages, and makes care bags for families who just received a foster child. In the IMPACT section of this Study Guide, you can get information on sponsoring a child through Compassion International.

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3 Go around and share as a group all the different needs that you have identified in our own neighborhood. As the group leader, help facilitate through this question and encourage your group members to meet the needs of their neighborhoods.

4 Growing up in the household of Pharaoh, would have given Moses all that life had to offer. Not only would he not be subject to slavery, but he would actually be educated and live a very privileged life. We read in Exodus chapter 3, that Moses stands up for his fellow Hebrew people by defending them. Certainly, God had a purpose for Moses's life.

17

5 This question is designed to help you and your group look introspectively at your own experiences. God uses human agents to bring about the goodness of His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We must be willing to be used by God in order to bring about change in this world. Allow ample time for your group members to answer this question. Remember, this doesn't necessarily have a right or wrong answer, but rather it allows for everyone in the group to draw from their own experiences, and see how God has already been using them.

6 As we read and study through the narrative of God, we see that throughout history God has used ordinary people to do extraordinary things for the sake of His Kingdom. God is a faithful God, and utilizes those that are willing to be used by Him an effort to bring about change in the world.

7 Go around the group and encourage people to share their perspective and experiences on how they have seen God transform people's lives with simple acts of compassion. Some suggestions for these acts can be; giving with no expectation of getting back, forgiving someone who has wronged you, serving a meal for a family in crisis, babysitting for a couple in need of a date night etc. Do not limit simple acts of compassion to these, but you can use them as a springboard for conversation.

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8 This story is a reminder that God can take an unlikely situation, with unlikely characters, and yet do something miraculous. You may be a parent or a parental figure, and as such, you have a unique responsibility to minister and shepherd the next generation's hearts. Allow your group to share how they can ensure that every son and daughter has an opportunity to grow.

18 **9** The Lord is always looking for willing participants. He is not necessarily looking for the most eloquent, the smartest, the fastest, or the wittiest. Rather, He is looking for a humble posture who is willing to walk in faith and trust Him.

10 Moses felt inadequate, and like many of us, when we find ourselves in situations where the Lord is leading us, we feel like we are inadequate and would rather God send someone else.

11 This is a very personal question, and one that demands some time to talk through. As their Life Group Leader, you may have to be vulnerable and share with the group what the Lord is leading you in. This could result in others wanting to share the mission that God has placed upon their hearts.

Deeper Study Questions

12 God is a just God! He has always taught His people to act in accordance to His justice and mercy. All three of these passages are examples of OT prophets, proclaiming the truth of God's justice to a world that was in desperate need of it.

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13 God's intent from the beginning of time was to make sure that the nation of Israel was walking in obedience, and as a result, He would bless them in every way. The purpose of them being blessed, was so that they would be a blessing to surrounding nations. God taught His covenant people how to be merciful and just, so that they would live lifestyles and bear His image to pagan nations. This way, others would know that YHWH was the one true God. Because He created every human in His image and His likeness, His desire is therefore to be just toward His creation.

19

14 There are so many layers to the injustices that we see in the world. The goal of this question is to help you and your group see that God has a purpose for His church in bringing about change to His world and His people.

15 As followers of Jesus, we have a responsibility to enact change. Share some practical things you can do as a lifestyle change, in order to bring about God's justice into a dying and perverse world.

SESSION FIVE

THE SOLDIER AND HIS SPOILS

20

Please remember these notes are to refer back to if NEEDED. They are a supplement to the discussion. The goal is not to get to the answers provided below but to engage in open and honest discussions. Please give adequate time for group members to respond to the questions before referring to these notes.

As you begin your group discussion, take some time to talk about some interesting points that your group members picked up from watching the video lesson. This is a good time to discuss something that was mentioned in the teaching or testimony that may not be discussed within the questions of the lesson.

1 The cause of Israel's defeat was the lying, stealing and disobedience of Achan. An Israelite soldier who had been trained for battle, and who was trusting that God was going to hand over his enemy, would have been extremely upset and disappointed knowing that one of his fellow soldiers failed them personally, and their entire nation suffered as a result.

2 If your group is having trouble articulating Joshua's response, be sure to re-read verses 6-9 and summarize Joshua's response.

3 In verse 13, God tells Joshua to go and consecrate the people. In other words, he was to sanctify them, purify them, dedicate them in preparation of what was to come the next day. Then Joshua was to present tribe by tribe, the nation of Israel, clan by clan, family by family.

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4 Achan was an Israelite who fought the battle of Jericho with Joshua. God had commanded the Israelites to destroy the entire city of Jericho because of its great sin. Only Rahab the harlot and her household were spared because she had hidden the Israelite spies (Joshua 6:17). God further commanded that, unlike most victories when soldiers were allowed to take the spoils, the Israelites were to take nothing from Jericho. Everything in it was “accursed” or “devoted to destruction.” God warned that anyone taking spoils from Jericho would “make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it” (Joshua 6:18-19). The Israelites obeyed, except for Achan, who stole a beautiful robe and some gold and silver and hid these things in his tent.

21

Achan was greedy and sinful. He was tempted and lured by his desires. As a result of his sin, many suffered along with him.

5 This is a personal and introspective question. If we expect people in our groups to share at this level of transparency, then we must model this for them as their Life Group Leaders. Remember to be sensitive to the people of your group. This can be an intimidating question for many.

6 Typically, when we have sinned, associated with that sin is shame and guilt, and we do everything we can to hide it. As a result, it causes us to try and manage our sin in unhealthy ways. Unfortunately, we know how this plays out all too well. Over time, it will hinder our spiritual growth and cause us to mask what is going on internally. Pretty soon, we may find ourselves interacting with people and putting on a façade, in order to hide what is going on internally.

7 As a result of Achan's sin, his entire family was killed and his community was devastated. Often times, the results of other people's sin affect many people around them. This is a time when you and your group can share how another's sin has affected you.

8 When we are mindful of others in our life, and stop to reflect how they will be affected by the decisions that we make, we can bring about better decisions and ultimately honoring results. In the case of Achan, had he

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fully thought through his actions and how they would affect others, we would read a different narrative in Joshua chapter 7.

9 At the risk of sounding idealistic, this question helps us see how the world can be, versus how it actually is. Help your group see the importance of considering others in your daily decision making.

22

10 God does not desire for us to conceal our sin. He knows that we sin, we know that we sin, others know that we sin, but yet we want to hide it as if it doesn't happen. It has been said that, "confession is good for the soul, but bad for the reputation." Confessing our sins has such a liberating effect on our lives, as well as the lives of others. This can truly lead to a path of healing and spiritual growth.

11 Confession is not that popular in Christian circles. There may not be many in your group who can actually respond to this question since confession is a lost spiritual discipline within the people of God. In any case, for those who do experience confession of sin with a brother or sister in Christ, have them share their experience.

12 Allow ample time to take prayer requests this week.

Deeper Study Questions

13 In the context of Numbers 14, Moses points out that, were God to fulfill His threat to annihilate Israel, the nations would say that the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land (cf. Exodus 32:12). He reminds God that He promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land (cf. Exodus 32:13). And finally, he quotes God's own description of His character to prove that He ought to forgive (Exodus 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18-19). The nation of Israel was one, and therefore their actions affected one another.

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Today, we live autonomously from other members of the Church and it is difficult for us to understand how our actions affect others. But for those of us who have experienced the sins of our parents, or their parents, we know that their choices have had an effect on us. These are the sorts of examples that we are seeking in this question.

14 By the nature of this question, this is a personal question that requires love and grace as you help facilitate through it.

23

15 As the people of God, we are able to experience God's grace and forgiveness in ways that are life changing. God makes this possible by allowing for us to confess what has been done, as well as empower us to live according to His will today. God is willing and able to forgive the sins of the past through Jesus, and He gives us a new life in Christ!

16 The atoning work of Christ has reconciled us back to God forever! It is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that we are able to be washed of sin, sanctified, and justified. God has given us a new life!

17 Our relationship with Jesus matters! It is so important for us to begin to understand how our obedience to the Lord, affects all the people around us. Have your group go around and share how they can allow Jesus to permeate their entire lives.

SESSION SIX

THE POSSE AND THE BORDER PATROL

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24

Take some time right after the group watches the video, to discuss what your different group members thought were the highlights of the teaching and testimony for them. There are absolutely no right or wrong answers here, but there is an opportunity to discuss some things that were important to some and maybe missed by others.

1 Paul is called to Macedonia. Through divine direction by the Holy Spirit, Paul was led to the town of Troas, where he received a vision directing him to witness in the Greek province of Macedonia. Natural human wisdom would have led them to think they should preach the gospel in all the cities that they passed through, but instead the Holy Spirit directed them on a 400-mile journey by foot to Troas.

2 If Paul would not have been attuned to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and obeyed what he saw in his vision, they could have ended up going somewhere where God did not intend for them. They obviously had a strong sense of the Spirit's direct guidance and concluded that He would guide others to preach the gospel in the northern regions of Asia and in Bithynia (cf. 1 Peter 1:1, where Peter writes to churches in that region).

3 This is a great opportunity for you and your Life Group to turn away from the text and discuss the actual significance for what has transpired in this narrative.

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4 In this conversation, it is important to remember that God has plans that are beyond our understanding. He is always doing something in the background that we cannot fully see or understand, but faith teaches us to trust in His faithfulness and not doubt what He is calling us to do. In any case, allow for your group to share how this could have been confusing to Jesus' followers.

5 This is a personal question regarding your group member's experiences with the Holy Spirit. Help them identify the times that the Holy Spirit has led them toward Kingdom work.

25

6 The Holy Spirit is someone who has been misunderstood by many people. There are numerous misconceptions about the identity of the Holy Spirit. Some view the Holy Spirit as a mystical force. Others understand the Holy Spirit as the impersonal power that God makes available to followers of Christ. Simply put, the Bible asserts that the Holy Spirit is God. The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, a being with a mind, emotions, and a will.

7 In these verses, we read that He is the Spirit of truth. He is the advocate. He is a teacher. He testifies about Jesus and the Father. He convicts the world of sin. This is just a small list of some of the attributes of our Triune God. Allow your group to search these passages for other attributes. With this list in mind, go around and share your experience.

8 This lesson has an experiential component to it, given the nature of the topic. As the Life Group Leader, help your group members in identifying the "voice of God," the "prompting of God," and the "moving of the Spirit" in their lives.

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9 For the New Testament believers, they knew that the life they were called to was a life of obedience to the Spirit of God. Unfortunately, over the course of many centuries, and many doctrinal differences, this conversation has caused much division in the Church. As evidence, these passages teach us about the significance of being connected with the Spirit of God, in order to accomplish the will of God.

26 10 The danger in not connecting with the Spirit of God is that too often, we are led astray by our evil desires and wants. When we walk in step with the Spirit, we cannot gratify the desires of our sinful nature. They are in opposition to one another. The Holy Spirit will never lead us astray, but will always coincide with the Word of God, the life and ministry of Jesus, and the Father's will on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Allow ample time to discuss this with your group members. It is important that we reflect and share where and what God is calling us to do.

Deeper Study Questions

12 To live according to the sinful nature, means to think continually about and constantly desire the things characteristic of fallen, sinful human nature. That is to think just the way the unbelieving world thinks, emphasizing what it thinks is important, pursuing what it pursues, in disregard of God's will.

13 As you facilitate conversation with your group, remember, this is to help them identify some characteristics of what a person who is submitted to God looks like. Although there is no "one" answer, have your group list out different qualities.

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14 To end this lesson, this question will help solidify the innerworkings of the Holy Spirit in the life of your group members. Allow enough time for people to share their personal experiences with God.

SESSION SEVEN

THE SCRIBE AND HIS SCROLLS

28 **Please remember these notes are to refer back to if NEEDED. They are a supplement to the discussion. The goal is not to get to the answers provided below but to engage in open and honest discussions. Please give adequate time for group members to respond to the questions before referring to these notes.**

Take this time to go around and have members of your group share what stood out to them in the video. Remember, for some, this may be the most comfortable they feel sharing.

1 In the 1st century, Scribes and Pharisees were two largely distinct groups, though presumably some scribes were Pharisees. In Mark's view, Jesus' main adversaries in Galilee were Scribes, but, according to Matthew, they were Pharisees. Scribes were a group of Jewish leaders who flourished from the time of the Exile until the destruction of the Jewish state by Titus (70 A.D.). Originally their name (Heb. sōperēm, writers) was used merely of clerks whose function was to copy royal and sacred manuscripts.

The scribes used a kind of paper called papyrus, which was made from reeds otherwise known as the papyrus plant. A scribe recorded in writing the everyday life and extraordinary happenings in ancient Egypt. Their jobs were varied and included writing letters for fellow villagers who couldn't write. A scribe is a person who serves as a professional copyist, especially one who made copies of manuscripts before the invention of automatic printing.

The profession, previously widespread across cultures, lost most of its prominence and status with the advent of the printing press. The work of scribes can involve copying manuscripts and other texts as well as secretarial and administrative duties such as the taking of dictation and

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keeping of business, judicial, and historical records for kings, nobles, temples, and cities. The profession has developed into public servants, journalists, accountants, typists, and lawyers. In societies with low literacy rates, street-corner letter-writers (and readers) may still be found providing scribe service.

2 It seems clear that Tertius is not just a writer for Paul, but also a fellow follower of Jesus. He seems happy to be a part of what Paul is doing and wants to be included in the gospel message he is helping Paul convey to the church in Rome. Most scribes simply write out what they are told or copy a transcript of some kind. But here, Tertius writes his own greeting to be included with the others Paul is sending.

29

For Paul to allow this simple greeting, he must've viewed Tertius as a very important part of the ministry and mission he was on. He must've spent a lot of time and trusted Tertius with a great deal of faith.

3 Being a scribe in the first century was a full-time job that could've earned a great deal of money. The Scribes that Jesus often encountered were very learned and knew the Law extremely well. They would have been considered high ranking in society at the time.

Tertius was on a different path than those other scribes. He was not doing this for the money. Being on mission with Paul would have put him very near or below the poverty level as they traveled and lived hand to mouth much of the time. He had a talent that God used to help Paul in his writings to the churches he was planting and encouraging. Even though virtually no one knows much of anything about Tertius, anyone who has read the book of Romans over the last 2,000 years has been affected by the work of he and Paul together.

4 There are countless, thankless jobs completed by many unknown people all over God's Kingdom. Some of them are on the maintenance team at your church. Nothing would be clean or set up properly if it was not for them. Some of them build sets for video and stage productions at

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your church. Some of them fill the communion trays every week. Some of them stuff bulletins or print out the sermon notes. Some of them prepare food for the homeless in our communities. Some of them care for and lead women out of the sex industry right here in our communities. Some of them minister to the grieving, the addicted, the divorced, those diagnosed with cancer, those that have lost children ... You might not know who they are, but their work would be greatly missed if they were not doing what God called them to do.

30

5 Prophecy, teaching, encouraging, leading, giving, faith, wisdom, healing, etc. Allow everyone a chance to add to this list as you go through these Scripture passages.

6 This passage is mainly address to those who feel that their gifts are inferior and unimportant. Apparently the more spectacular gifts (such as tongues) had been glorified in the Corinthian church, making those who did not have them feel inferior. As the human body must have diversity to work effectively as a whole, so the members of Christ's body must have diverse gifts, the use of which can help bring about the accomplishment of Christ's united purpose. Each must properly exercise their gifts or effectively use their position for the good of the whole.

7 Gifts used improperly can damage others and cause emotional and spiritual trauma. Improper use of gifts often brings praise to the individual rather than build up the body. This causes others to feel less than necessary and/or marginalized. People who act selfishly tend to hurt others to get what they want. This causes all different sorts of chaos that trickles down and out to others.

Love is the means by which a spiritual gift is made effective.

8 The principle here is the interdependence of the parts of the body in the one whole. Christians in the body of Christ are mutually dependent as they exercise their distinctive functions. Paul insists that whatever is done in the church must contribute to the edification or building up of the body.

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This is in keeping with the declaration in 1 Corinthians 12:7 that the gifts are “given for the common good.”

9 This question is asking for personal answers. Some in your group may have a very good idea and others will have no clue. Either is fine with the idea that we want to move toward gaining personal insight and using these gifts to edify the church.

31

10 This question is once again asking for personal answers. Allow everyone who is willing to answer. Again, some in your group may have a very good idea and others will have no clue. Either is fine, with the idea that we want to move toward gaining personal insight and using these gifts to edify the church.

11 This is again asking a personal question. Listen to your group members as they answer, and give them encouragement as they do. Especially if they are not sure what to think of the concept of spiritual gifts.

Deeper Study Questions

12 Do all things in love that will give glory and honor to God.

13 Gifts used improperly can damage others and cause emotional and spiritual trauma. Improper use of gifts often brings praise to the individual rather than build up the body. This causes others to feel less than necessary and/or marginalized. People who act selfishly tend to hurt others to get what they want. This causes all different sorts of chaos that trickles down and out to others. Hurting people hurt other people.

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14 There is less selfish ambition and desire to gain power for one's self. Proper use of gifts puts others before self and will work out to the benefit of all rather than just one or a few. In using spiritual gifts properly, the Church would begin looking much different than the world. The differences would be very attractive to most people which would be a greater draw for those that have been burned by people both inside and outside the church in the past. If people saw a greater difference of love in action, they would be more inclined to seek Jesus' love from people who display His love.

32

15 Even though Tertius received virtually no recognition from people for what he did, his gifts were definitely used for the edification (building up) of the church and has been a huge benefit to all who have read his work. Paul gets almost all of the credit, but if it had not been for Tertius, the work may not have been completed and passed on to us some 2,000 years later.

16 This is once again asking for a personal answer. Allow everyone in the group who is willing to answer. Encourage the quieter members of the group to share what is on their heart in regards to this topic. Give them a chance to be a part of the conversation.

SESSION EIGHT

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS DREAMS

Please remember these notes are to refer back to if NEEDED. They are a supplement to the discussion. The goal is not to get to the answers provided below but to engage in open and honest discussions. Please give adequate time for group members to respond to the questions before referring to these notes. 33

Take this time to go around and have members of your group share what stood out to them in the video. Remember, for some, this may be the most comfortable they feel sharing.

1 God was telling Peter that it was time to unlearn what he had learned. The Law had been fulfilled, and it was time for the gospel message to move beyond the Jewish people to all nations. God's plan was always to include everyone, Jew and Gentile. All nations were to be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

2 It must've been very difficult for Peter to go against what he had grown up with and had always done. He was probably scared to receive this message. Nervous about what it would do in his standing in the Jewish community. Take away the separation he had from "sinners" (Gentiles). It was a total paradigm shift.

3 So deeply ingrained was the observance of the laws of clean and unclean that Peter refused to obey immediately. Anything common (impure) was forbidden by the Law to be eaten. This was more than just rules for Peter and any Jewish person. The food restrictions they followed was part of what made them who they were. Aside from circumcision, food restrictions were largely what separated Jewish people from Gentile

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people. This was going against family and community. It was going against thousands of years of tradition and teaching. This was going against what they were taught was direct commandments from God.

34

4 Jesus had already laid the groundwork for setting aside the laws of clean and unclean food in Matthew 15:11. Paul furthers this teaching in 1 Timothy 4:3-5. Peter takes his first steps toward accepting Gentiles in Acts 10:23 as he invites Gentile men into his house. Such intimate relationship with Gentiles was contrary to prescribed Jewish practice.

5 This is a very personal question and may be difficult for some to answer. Be compassionate as you go around the group. Encourage everyone to share and be gracious toward them as they do.

6 This may also be a difficult question to answer. We must be willing to pull back from our own perspective and see a larger world view, or better yet, a Kingdom view of people in order to better love them. Our own perspective will only begin to look small and narrow if we give ourselves a larger perspective that will uncover our limited principles and beliefs.

7 “Sinners” were notoriously evil people and often refused to follow the Mosaic law as interpreted by the teachers of the law. Touching or being near these “sinners” and “unclean” people was an act that, according to Mosaic law, brought defilement and made them ceremonially unclean. This meant they could not go to the temple or participate in any of the Jewish ceremonies or other “righteous” acts of the time.

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8 Jesus had compassion on people. He met them where they were. He was not snobby or rude to them. He showed them love and made them feel worth. He was very approachable. He answered their questions and talked with anyone as if they mattered, because they did matter to Him.

Jesus knew the importance of all people regardless of their heritage or background. Jesus' compassion for people superseded ceremonial considerations. He would later command His disciples to "love one another ... as I have loved you, so you must love one another ..." This was not just a command He was giving to them. This was a way of life for Jesus from the very beginning.

35

9 This is another difficult question. Be aware that some may feel uncomfortable. Be encouraging and gracious. Also remember to share your own shortcomings and be transparent with your group. This will bring a sense of ease to anyone who is unsure of the safe space your group has to offer.

10 The first part of this question is another personal one that will bring many various answers.

Some of the benefits would be more trust in each other. Some would not feel defensive and others would not be looking for trouble to happen. Allow everyone in your group to answer this question. There are many answers that will be given. Listen carefully as your group members share and gain some insight to their perspective and maturity levels. Remember, no quick fixes or snap judgments.

11 Once again, allow your group members to share as you conclude this lesson. Be attentive and take notes so that you may pray for each other as the group time ends and on into the coming weeks.

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Deeper Study Questions

12 There is mention of all nations and/or Jews and Gentiles being called together for the sake of Christ.

36 13 This question will evoke many various answers. Allow your group to share their thoughts and feelings on this question. Some may feel elated and others may not have thought very much about it yet. Encourage everyone as they are sharing their answers.

14 It is said that Sunday morning is the most segregated of all times in the week. People seem to associate more with others who look and act like they do. Not that there is anything intrinsically wrong with that, but at times, the group dynamic can close themselves to “outsiders” to a point where they keep them at more than an arm’s distance. Or even worse, actually try to do harm to other groups. This can manifest in all kinds of different ways. This mentality can easily hinder the spread of the gospel.

15 There are more than 10 million people in Los Angeles County alone. More than half of Los Angeles County residents speak a language other than English at home. The 10 most frequently spoken languages countywide are: English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, Vietnamese, Farsi, Japanese and Russian. When Jesus commanded His followers to go to all nations to make disciples, there was no way for His first followers to conceive that many of those nations would be represented in one city. We Angelinos have an incredible opportunity to live out His commands right here in our own community!