



FLOURISHING
LIFE JOURNEY

Flourishing
DISCIPLE

FINDING A PLACE TO GROW

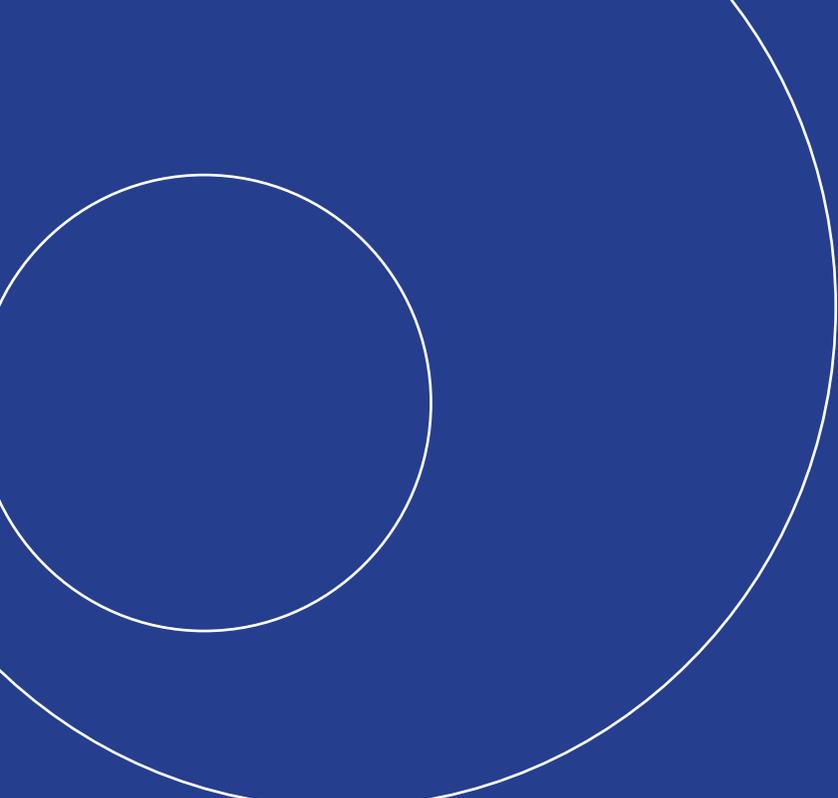
**ROGER PATTERSON
& BRETT EASTMAN**

Flourishing
DISCIPLE

ROGER PATTERSON & BRETT EASTMAN



FLOURISHING
LIFE JOURNEY



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welcome



Throughout this series, we've been saying that God has designed us to flourish in the world He created. If you look around, you'll almost always see that living things which are flourishing are in some way growing. Whether it is a tree, an animal or a child, flourishing means growing to full maturity and fruitfulness.

God has given us through His Word everything we need in order to flourish spiritually. The process of growing in our faith is called discipleship. Jesus' disciples were those who followed Him in order to learn from Him, become like Him, and therefore grow and flourish in their faith.

In this study, we'll learn about four major areas of discipleship: studying the Word, prayer, worship, and sharing our faith with others. I hope you will be encouraged to begin engaging in these powerful tools of discipleship, and I hope you'll do this study with other people, because fellowship is another of those key ingredients for discipleship.

Our entire Flourishing series is designed to help you in the discipleship process, but this particular study gets directly to the heart of it. Jesus died on the cross, not only to save us from God's righteous punishment for sin, but also to become Lord of our lives and our Teacher. We are His apprentices, and this time will teach us much about following Him.

I am thrilled to be joining you for these next four weeks as we learn to flourish and grow together by being disciples of Jesus.

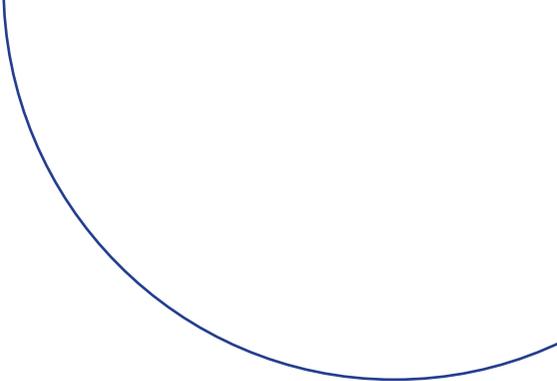
ROGER PATTERSON

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYRISE

using

THIS WORKBOOK



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1. Notice in the Table of Contents there are three sections: (1) Sessions; (2) Appendices; and (3) Small Group Leaders. Familiarize yourself with the Appendices. Some of them will be used in the sessions themselves.
 2. If you are facilitating/leading or co-leading a small group, the section Small Group Leaders will give you some hard-learned experiences of others that will encourage you and help you avoid many common obstacles to effective small group leadership.
 3. Use this workbook to guide your group, not to limit. If the group responds to the lesson in an unexpected but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than the next one in the lesson, ask it. Take to heart the insights included in the Frequently Asked Questions pages and the Small Group Leaders section.
 4. Enjoy your small group experience.
 5. Pray before each session—for your group members, for your time together, or wisdom and insights.
 6. Read the outline for each session on the next pages so that you understand how the sessions will flow.

outline

OF EACH SESSION

A typical group session for the Flourishing Ministry study will include the following sections. Read through this to get a clear idea of how each group meeting will be structured:

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSES. Each session opens with a memory verse that emphasizes an important truth from the session. This is an optional exercise, but we believe that memorizing scripture can be a vital part of filling our minds with God's will for our lives. We encourage you to give this important habit a try. The verses for our four sessions are also listed in the appendix.

INTRODUCTION. Each lesson opens with a brief thought that will help you prepare for the session and get you thinking about the particular subject you will explore with your group. Make it a practice to read these before the session. You may want to have the group read this brief section aloud.

SHARE YOUR STORY. The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family. You build that connection by sharing your story with a few people who really know you and who earn your trust. This section includes some simple questions to get you talking—letting you share as much or as little of your story as you feel comfortable doing. They provide a warm up to deeper discussion.

HEAR GOD'S STORY. In this section, you'll read the Bible and listen to teaching, in order to hear God's story—and begin to see how His story aligns with yours. When the study directs you to, you'll watch a short teaching segment. You'll then have an opportunity to read a passage of

Scripture and discuss both the teaching and the text. You won't focus on accumulating information but on how you should live and flourish in light of the Word of God. We want to help you apply the insights from Scripture practically and creatively, from your heart as well as from your head. At the end of the day, allowing the timeless truths from God's Word to transform your life in Christ should be your greatest aim.

CREATE A NEW STORY. In this section, you'll have an opportunity to go beyond Bible study to biblical living. This section will also have a question or two that will challenge you to live out your faith by serving others, sharing your faith, or worshipping God.

DAILY DEVOTIONS. Each week on the Daily Devotions pages we provide Scriptures to read and reflect on between sessions. This provides you with a chance to slow down, read just a small portion of Scripture each day, and reflect and pray through it. You'll then have a chance to journal a short response to what you've read. Use this section to seek God on your own throughout the week. This time at home should begin and end with prayer. Don't get in a hurry; take enough time to hear God's direction so you can flourish.



SESSION ONE

The Bible



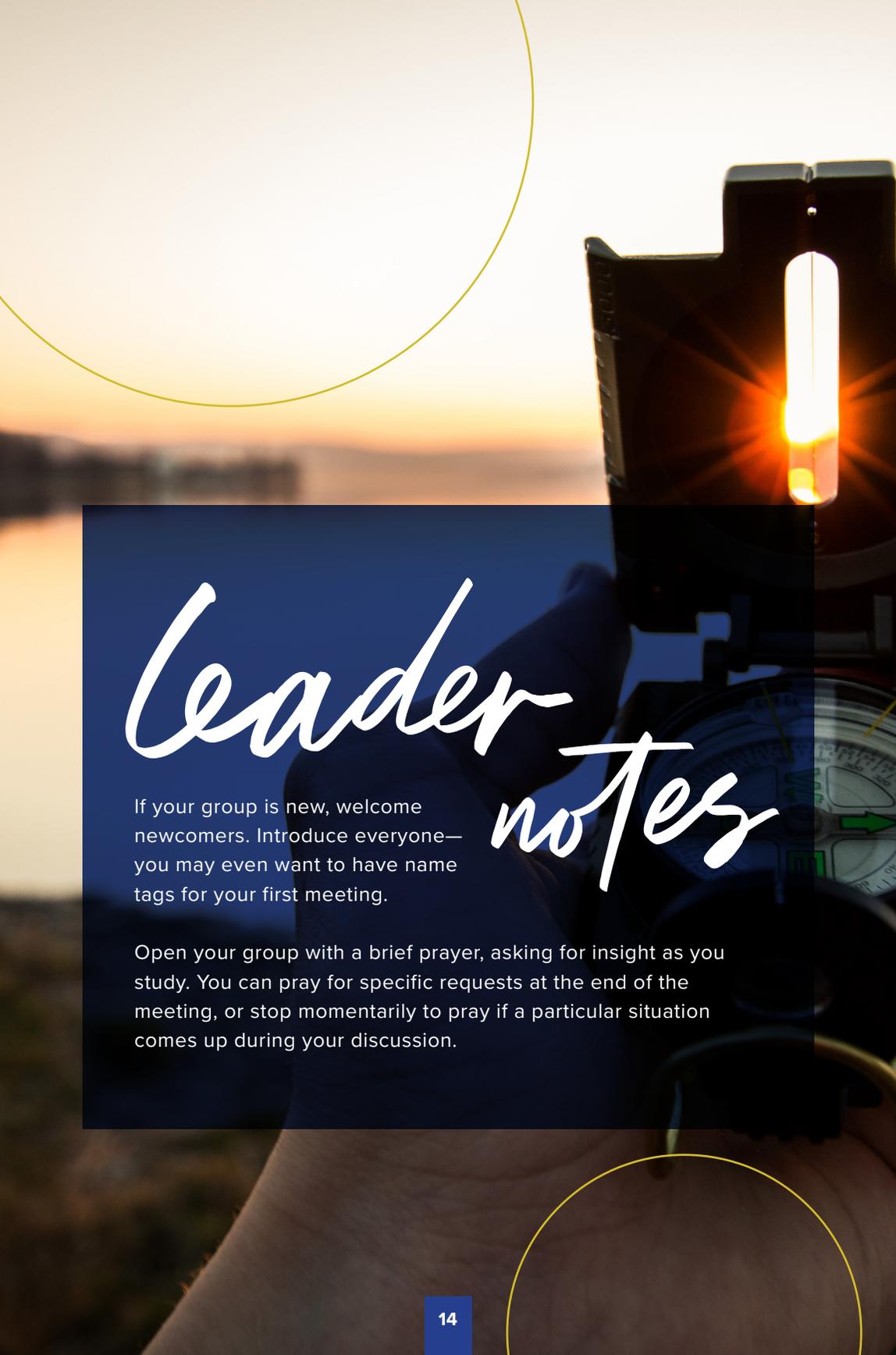
For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Just as we all need food so our physical bodies can flourish, we also need spiritual food if we want to grow and flourish spiritually. As we begin our discussion of growing to be more like Jesus, we're focusing on one of the main sources of spiritual nourishment and flourishing that God gives us – His Word, the Bible.

There are lots of ideas out there about the Bible. Some people think it's a collection of stories and myths. Others believe it's just boring laws. But, in reality, neither of those things are true – the Bible is the inspired Word of God and it's really not one book – it's a library of 66 books that include history, poetry, biography, letters, and more. And each book is given to help us know God better, become more like Him, and flourish as His people.



A hand holding a compass against a sunset background with a blue overlay. The compass is the central focus, with its needle pointing towards the top right. The background is a warm sunset with a large yellow circle in the upper left and a smaller yellow circle in the lower right. The blue overlay is a semi-transparent rectangle that covers the middle and bottom parts of the image.

Leader notes

If your group is new, welcome newcomers. Introduce everyone—you may even want to have name tags for your first meeting.

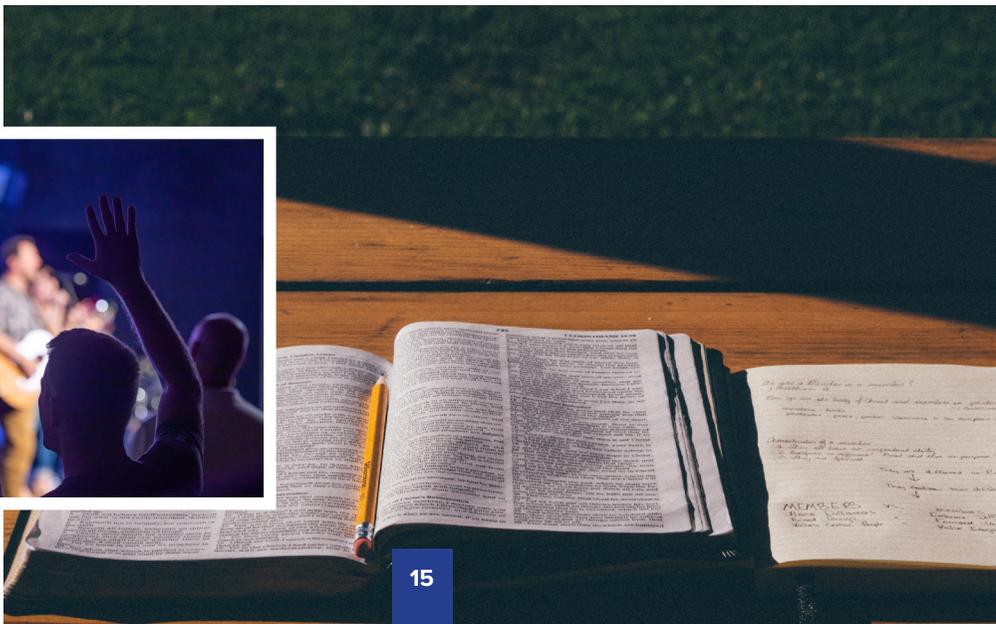
Open your group with a brief prayer, asking for insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of the meeting, or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

Share

YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- Did you grow up in church, or did you start exploring faith as an adult?
- What do you hope to get out of this group?
- What is your most vivid memory in studying the Bible?



watch

THE VIDEO

Use the Notes space provided below to record key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and start the conversation.

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GOD'S STORY





Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

- What does it mean for Scripture to be "God-breathed?"
- It's clear how the Bible teaches us, but how does the Bible rebuke us? Correct us? Train us in righteousness?
- The goal of Scripture is that we would be equipped – that we would know more, understand more, be challenged more, or be better able to obey Him. How has the Bible equipped you? How has this helped you to flourish as a disciple?



create

A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- How can you make Bible study a part of your life?
- What would it look like for you to meditate on and memorize Scripture?
- What gets in the way of you studying God's Word?
- What are you willing to commit to this week?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer and Praise Report on page 76.

Close your meeting with prayer.



daily

DEVOTIONS

Day 1

Joshua 1:8-9

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Reflect:

How can God's Word strengthen you and cause you to flourish?

Day 2

2 Thessalonians 2:15-16

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace...

Reflect:

How can you "stand fast" and "hold firm"?

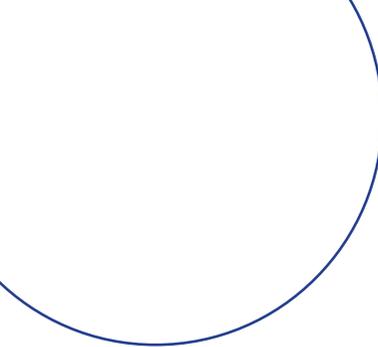
Day 3

Isaiah 55:11

...so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Reflect:

How does this promise encourage you?



Day 4

Psalm 1:2-3

...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Reflect:

What fruit is causing you to flourish in your life through reading the Bible?

Day 5

James 1:22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Reflect:

How do you give action to what you learn by reading the Bible? How do you “do what it says?”

Day 6

Use the following space to reflect on what you learned this week and what God is saying to you.

SESSION TWO

Prayer

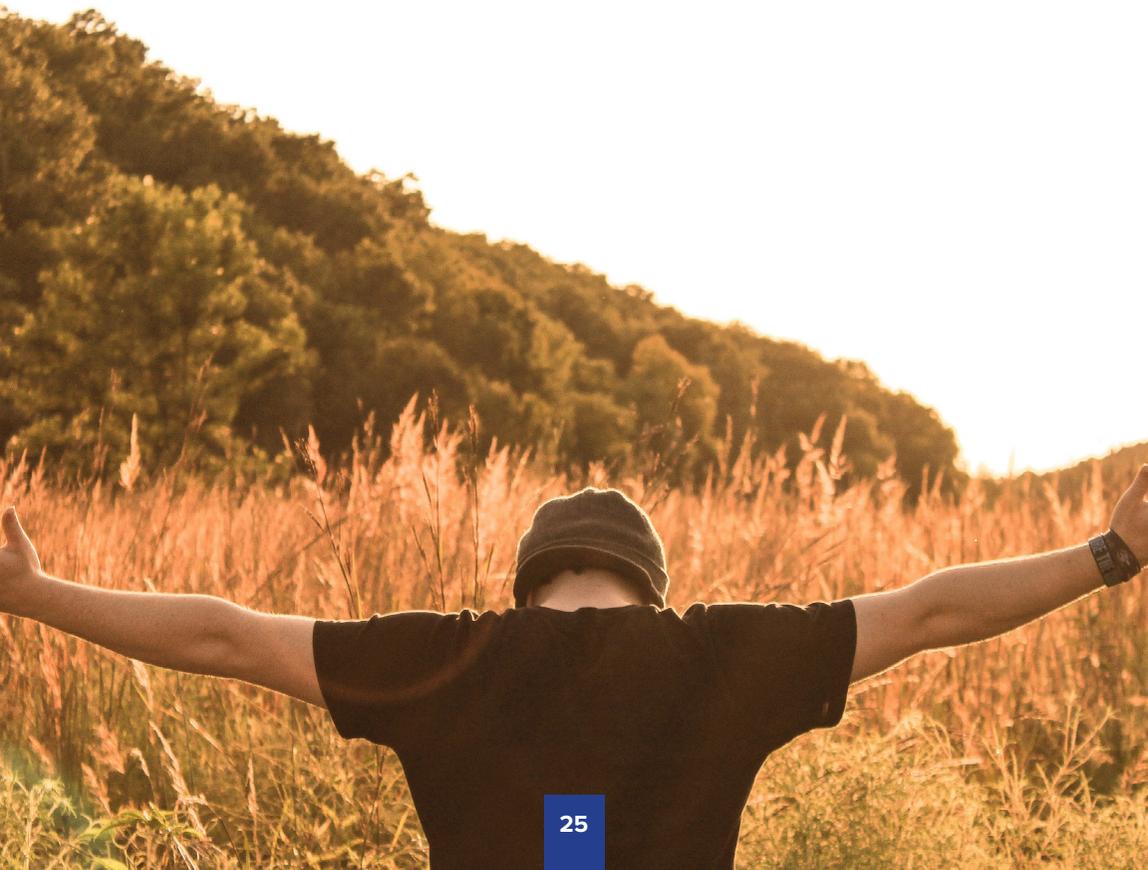


...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:18

Last week we talked about one really important way we grow spiritually – by reading what God has to say to us in His Word. Today we’re talking about another important part of our growth – hearing from God – and talking to Him – in prayer.

Both of those parts of prayer are important. Prayer is truly a two-way street. If we’re doing all the talking, we’re not going to flourish by receiving the comfort, encouragement, or instruction God wants to give us. But if we don’t share our hearts with God, we’re also cutting ourselves off from everything He wants to do in our lives.

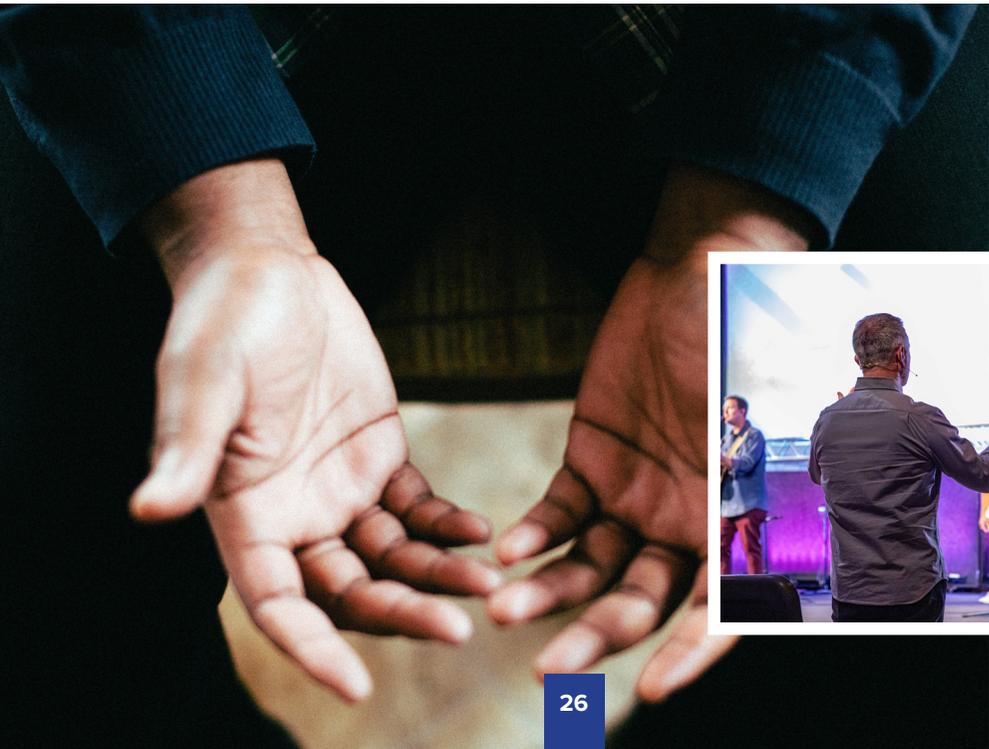


Share

YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- Who is your favorite person to talk to?
- What do you love about talking to them?
- What did you learn from your Daily Devotions this past week?





watch

THE VIDEO

Use the Notes space provided below to record any key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and start the conversation.

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GOD'S STORY





Read Colossians 4:2-3.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison.

- What does it mean to devote yourself to something or someone?
- Don Carson said, “Much praying is not done because we do not plan to pray.” What is your plan for prayer?
- Do you only pray in times of crisis? What about when you are flourishing?
- We should be praying against temptations. What’s missing if we pray, but are not watchful?



create

A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned. Respond to the idea that flourishing in prayer is about listening as much as it is about talking.

- How does your life improve when you make time to talk with God?
- Some people find it useful to have a model for prayer. One is the ACTS model where you use the letters of the acronym as a pattern for prayer. In this model you begin with Adoration, then Confession, then Thanksgiving, the Supplication where you make your requests. Have you used any kind of model for prayer?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer and Praise report on page 76.

Close your meeting with prayer.



daily

DEVOTIONS

Day 1

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Reflect:

What are your actions in prayer and what are God's responses?

Day 2

James 5:13-15

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Reflect:

Are you able to bring all of your troubles to the Lord?

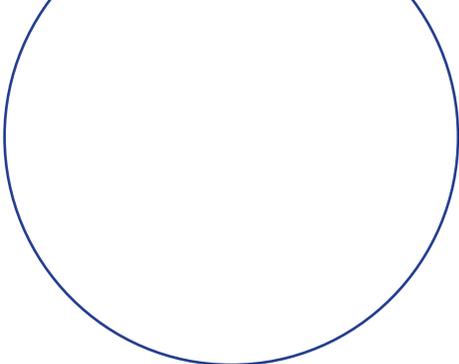
Day 3

Matthew 6:7-8

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Reflect:

What great news! Our Father already knows our needs! How can you pray simply and directly?



Day 4

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Reflect:

How can I approach the throne of grace with confidence?

Day 5

Matthew 6:9-13

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Reflect:

This is often called “The Lord’s Prayer.” Spend some time and pray these words.

Day 6

Use the following space to reflect on what you learned this week and what God is saying to you. How has what you have learned caused you to flourish this week?

SESSION THREE

Worship



I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

What do you think of when you hear the word “worship?” Perhaps you think, “well, you have to go to church. There has to be ritual. There have to be certain songs and certain prayers.” Songs and prayers are great and church services are important. But you can do all that and it doesn’t mean you’re worshipping, because flourishing in worship is more than attending a service or saying words. Worship is a lifestyle.

So many times we get caught up in a style of music or preaching, and we forget that our weekend worship experience is just a small part of what worship is. When we get together to worship God on the weekend, that should be just one moment of a whole week of worshipping God through what we say and think and do.



Share

YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- Tell your group about your favorite sports team. What is the most outrageous thing you have done to show what a big fan you are? If you are not a sports fan... what are you a fan of?
- What did you learn from your Daily Devotions this past week?





watch

THE VIDEO

Use the Notes space provided below to record any key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and start the conversation.

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GOD'S STORY





Read Luke 13:10-13.

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

- In Genesis 2:3 after God had created the world, the Bible says, “Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”
- Pastor Roger said in the video, “God took a break from work to focus solely on His relationship with man and woman. The humans also took a break from work to focus solely on their relationship with God.” Do you take a break from work? Why or why not?
- Focus on God provides a change in perspective. How does worship change your perspective? Do you feel it causes you to flourish in your relationship with God?
- Jesus told the crippled woman that she was set free during a time of worship. How have you experienced God’s freedom in worship? How would receiving God’s freedom in your life cause you to flourish?



create

A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- What will living a life of worship mean to you?
- How has God worked in your life through singing and praising?
- What would worship look like if you could never sing again?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer and Praise report on page 76.

Close your meeting with prayer.



daily

DEVOTIONS

Day 1

Psalm 150:6

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Reflect:

What are some ways that you can praise the Lord today?

Day 2

John 4:23

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Reflect:

What does it mean to worship in Spirit and in truth?

Day 3

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Reflect:

How could cultivating reverence and awe of God lead to flourishing in your life?

Day 4

Luke 4:8

And Jesus answered him, "It is written," "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.

Reflect:

How can you eliminate distractions in your life to focus all of your worship on God?

Day 5

1 Peter 2:5

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Reflect:

How are you using your life as a sacrifice?

Day 6

Use the following space to reflect on what you learned this week and what God is saying to you.

SESSION FOUR

Share



You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

One of the key ways to flourish in your faith is to share it with others. Sometimes we feel intimidated by this – we worry that someone will ask us a question we can't answer, or that we will have to go door-to-door like a faith salesman. But really God is simply asking us to be His witnesses, sharing his love and reflecting who he is with the rest of the world.



Share

YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- What has surprised you most about this group?
- Where did God meet you over the last four weeks?
- What did you learn from your Daily Devotions this past week?





watch

THE VIDEO

Use the Notes space provided below to record any key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and start the conversation.

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GOD'S STORY





Read Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

- How do you respond to this command, and how have you responded in the past?
- During this series we have been learning how to grow in our faith. How will your growth help you follow through on this command?
- You may be called to “all nations,” or you may be called next door. The important thing is to be willing to “go” wherever God calls. Are you willing?
- We don’t have to have it all figured out. Disciples are constant learners. Where are you learning and where are you then teaching others?

create

A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- What are some practical ways you can begin to share your faith in your day to day life?
- Take a moment and think of three people who you can begin praying for and asking God for opportunities to share the gospel with them. Write in their names below and share them with your group so they can pray with you.

Friend 1:

Friend 2:

Friend 3:

- How are you more committed to your growth than you were at the beginning of this study? Share some victories and ask the group to pray for the areas where you want to continue growing.

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer and Praise report on page 76.

Close your meeting with prayer.



daily

DEVOTIONS

Day 1

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Reflect:

Consider just how powerful the gospel has been in your life and how it has caused you to flourish. How can you share that same power with others through your story?

Day 2

Isaiah 12:4

And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

Reflect:

Sometimes when you share with others it's not just one person, but it proclaims His name among the nations. How can you join this mission to the nations?

Day 3

John 15:8

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Reflect:

Our flourishing lives reflect our devotion to Jesus. How can you live every day to show that fruit to others?

Day 4

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Reflect:

How does knowing that the Holy Spirit is with you as you share give you peace or comfort?

Day 5

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Reflect:

How does your prayer life, worship and Bible study give you tools to share your faith?

Day 6

Use the following space to write any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at in this session and during your Daily Devotions time this week.





Appendices



frequently

ASKED QUESTIONS

What do we do on the first night of our group?

Like all fun things in life—have a party! A "get to know you" coffee, dinner, or dessert is a great way to launch a new study. You may want to review the Group Agreement (page 64) and share the names of a few friends you can invite to join you. But most importantly, have fun before your study time begins.

Can we do this study on our own?

Absolutely! This may sound crazy, but one of the best ways to do this study is not with a full house but with a few friends. You may choose to gather with another couple or a few friends who would going out to dinner and then walking through this study.

What if this group is not working for me?

You're not alone! This could be the result of a personality conflict, life stage difference, geographical distance, level of spiritual maturity, or any number of things. Relax. Pray for God's direction, and at the end of the study, decide whether to continue with this group or find another. However, don't bail out before the four weeks are up—God might have something to teach you. And don't run from conflict or prejudice people before you have given them a chance. God is still working in your life, too!

Who is the leader?

Most groups have an official leader. But ideally, the group will mature and members will rotate the leadership of meetings. We have discovered that healthy groups rotate hosts/leaders and homes on a regular basis. This model ensures that all members grow, give their unique contribution, and develop their gifts. This study guide and the Holy Spirit can keep things on track even when you rotate leaders. Christ has promised to be in your midst as you gather. Ultimately, God is your leader each step of the way.

How do we handle the childcare needs in our group?

Very carefully. Seriously, this can be a sensitive issue. We suggest that you empower the group to openly brainstorm solutions. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room and to share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can watch the kids in a different part of the house. This way, parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home. A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults. A third idea is to rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson or care for the children either in the same home or in another home nearby. This can be an incredible blessing for kids. Finally, the most common solution is to decide that you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually or as a couple and to make your own arrangements for childcare. No matter what decision the group makes, the best approach is to dialogue openly about both the problem and the solution.





small

GROUP AGREEMENT

OUR PURPOSE

To provide a predictable environment where participants experience authentic community and spiritual growth.

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance

To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent. (Completing the Group Calendar on page 66 will minimize this issue.)

Safe Environment

To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences

To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or “imperfections” in fellow group members. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality

To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth

To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Shared Ownership

To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attendee will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes

To encourage different people to host the group in their homes and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting. (See the Group Calendar on page 66.)

OUR REMINDERS

- Refreshments/mealtimes
 - Childcare
 - When we will meet (day of week)
 - Where we will meet (place)
 - We will begin at (time) and end at
 - We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
 - Our primary worship service time will be
 - Date of this agreement
 - Date we will review this agreement again
 - Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement?
-

small

GROUP CALENDAR

Planning and calendaring can help ensure the greatest participation at every meeting. At the end of each meeting, review this calendar. Be sure to include a regular rotation of host homes and leaders, and don't forget birthdays, socials, church events, holidays, and mission/ministry projects.

MEETING DATE	LESSON NUMBER	HOST HOME	DESSERT/ MEAL	GROUP LEADER
Monday Jan. 15	1	Steve & Laura's	Joe	Bill

CUT & REVIEW
THE MEMORY VERSES
ON THE OTHER SIDE
OF THIS PAGE.

cut

One

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

HEBREWS 4:12

Two

Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

EPHESIANS 6:18

Three

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

ROMANS 12:1

Four

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

MATTHEW 5:14





Matthew 10:1-7

And the woman was healed from that

hour.

And Jesus entered the synagogue

and began to teach. They were

astonished at his teaching, for he

taught as one who has authority,

and not as the scribes and

pharisees.

And he said to them, Why do you

astonish me? For I teach with

authority, and not as these

scribes and pharisees.

And he said to them, Why do you

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Small Group Leaders

hosting

AN OPEN HOUSE

If you're starting a new group, try planning an "open house" before your first formal group meeting. Even if you have only two to four core members, it's a great way to break the ice and to consider prayerfully who else might be open to joining you over the next few weeks. You can also use this kick-off meeting to hand out study guides, spend some time getting to know each other, discuss each person's expectations for the group and briefly pray for each other. A simple meal or good dessert always make a kick-off meeting more fun.

After people introduce themselves, have everyone respond to a few icebreaker questions:

- What is your favorite family vacation?
- What is one thing you love about your church/our community?
- What are three things about your life growing up that most people here don't know?

Next, ask everyone to tell what he or she hopes to get out of the study. You might want to review the Small Group Agreement and talk about each person's expectations and priorities.

Finally, set an open chair (maybe two) in the center of your group and explain that it represents someone who would enjoy or benefit from this group but who isn't here yet. Ask people to pray about inviting someone to join the group over the next few weeks. Hand out postcards and have everyone write an invitation or two. Don't worry about ending up with too many people; you can always have one discussion circle in the living room and another in the dining room after

you watch the lesson. Each group could then report prayer requests and progress at the end of the session.

You can skip this kick-off meeting if your time is limited, but you'll experience a huge benefit if you take the time to connect with each other in this way.



Leading

FOR THE
FIRST TIME

Sweaty palms are a healthy sign. The Bible says God is gracious to the humble. Remember who is in control. The time to worry is when you're not worried. Those who are soft in heart (and sweaty-palmed) are those whom God is sure to speak through.

Seek support. Ask your leader, co-leader, or close friend to pray for you and prepare with you before the session. Walking through the study will help you anticipate potentially difficult questions and discussion topics.

Bring your uniqueness to the study. Lean into who you are and how God wants you to uniquely lead the study.

Prepare. Go through the session material. If you are using the video, listen to the teaching segment. Don't wait until the last minute to prepare.

Be time conscious. Everyone leads busy lives. One of the greatest ways you can value people is by placing value on their time. Therefore, you will want to be certain you are beginning on time and concluding on time. Be aware of the clock throughout the group session.

Ask for feedback so you can grow. Perhaps in an email or on cards handed out at the study, have everyone write down three things you did well and one thing you could improve on. Demonstrate an openness to learn and grow.

Prayerfully consider launching a new group.

This doesn't need to happen overnight, but keep growth as a goal. Not all Christians are called to be leaders or teachers, but we are all called to be "shepherds" of a few someday.

Share with your group what God is doing in your heart.

God is searching for those whose hearts are fully His. Share your trials and victories. We promise that people will relate.



prayer

& PRAISE REPORT

	PRAYER REQUEST	PRAISE REPORT
SESSION 1		
SESSION 2		
SESSION 3		
SESSION 4		



notes

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel, slanted yellow lines that create a striped pattern across the top right portion of the page.

notes

Flourishing DISCIPLE

Discipleship is at the heart of belonging to Jesus, and belonging to Jesus is at the heart of flourishing as His people.

This powerful study, meant to be shared with others in a small group setting, will give you what you need to become faithful disciples of Jesus. Through studying the Scriptures, speaking and listening to God in prayer, worship Him alone or with the gathered church, and sharing our faith, we can grow in Christlikeness and flourish in our faith!



ROGER PATTERSON SENIOR PASTOR, CITYRISE NETWORK

Dr. Roger Patterson is the lead pastor of CityRise, a multi-site congregation of West University Baptist Church, Crosspoint Church Bellaire, and CityRise Missouri City, located in the heart of Houston, Texas. Through CityRise, Roger has created the CityRise Network, a network of churches, ministries, non-profits, and global partners whose vision is to lift the city and world by generously giving the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is a husband to Julee and father to Brady, Cooper and Carson. He is the author of Fight For It, A Minute of Vision for Men, and co-author of Leading from the Second Chair.

BRETT EASTMAN FOUNDER, LIFETOGETHER MINISTRIES

In 2006, after serving as the Small Group Champion at Saddleback Church and Willow Creek Community Church, Brett Eastman founded LifeTogether. Brett has produced award-winning resources for over one hundred of the fastest growing and farthest reaching churches today through his publishing partners including Zondervan, Tyndale, Thomas Nelson, and Purpose Driven Ministries, with whom Brett produced the bestselling Purpose Driven Small Group Curriculum. Brett has degrees from San Diego State University, Biola University, Talbot School of Theology and a Management Certificate from Northwestern University in Chicago, IL. Brett is married to Dee, and they have raised five amazing children.



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