**Let’s Go Group Studies**

**Leader’s Notes**

1. We’re providing this material to you to remove some of the stress and frustration of developing a plan to lead a specific group study. It isn’t meant to replace your individual preparation to lead. Our hope is that you would use it as a guide to your engagement with the text and the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead you as you help your study’s participants to have their own relevant encounter with scripture and the Holy Spirit.
2. This plan isn’t meant to constrain you to lead in any specific way. **Please do modify it to better meet the needs of your group and to honor your gifting and authentic style.** For example, when and how you pray and share prayer needs should be in a rhythm that is good for your group as long as you are praying as a group. For another, who and how scripture is read should fit your group and its needs as long as it is read somehow.
3. **Be authentic**. If you find yourself saying “They are asking” as in, ‘I didn’t write this question and I don’t really understand why it is being asked.’ Don’t ask it. Ask something else. It is okay not to understand everything. No one understands everything. If you don’t believe in what you’re saying, why should anyone else believe it? One way to turn this into a positive is to admit to the group that you are struggling with figuring out a particular bit and allow someone else to contribute their God-given wisdom.
4. Some questions, especially earlier in the study, aren’t meant to be a mile deep or transformative. These questions are intended to prompt the participants to notice what is there. They give the participants a way to begin to care about the specific words on the page and to begin to discuss the relevance of the scripture to their needs.
5. Portions of the plan in quotes are meant to be spoken out loud to the group as in, “Who’s buried in Grant’s Tomb?” You don’t have to repeat the question or statement exactly as it appears. Restate it in a way that feels comfortable and natural for you.
6. Portions of the plan in *italics* are meant to be notes to you that you can use as prompts in aiding group discussion and aren’t intended to be read verbatim to the group. They may not be the definitive answer but should be a good possible answer. As part of your preparation, please add to and edit the notes to fit where you intend to lead the discussion.
7. A **Follow up question** helps participants open up a little more and look a little deeper and is meant to be asked after there has been some discussion of the prior question.
8. The last page is the participant handout.
9. Please remember that our focus, purpose and practice is to **Love God, Love Others and Make Disciples**.

**Let’s Go-** **Seeing**

1. Scripture: Mark 8:1-26
   1. Parallel accounts- Matt 15:32-16:12
2. Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should have identified a need that God has satisfied and made a plan for how they can give God praise this week for that provision.
3. Resources: Book of Mark, Grassmick. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Walvoord & Zuck, Dictionary of Biblical Imagery © 1998 by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA
4. Preparation:
   1. Pray for guidance
   2. Review Leader’s Notes and read entire lesson plan
5. Prayer requests & Open in prayer
6. Intro:
   1. “Last time I asked you ‘What can you do this week to connect or reconnect with something about God that excites you enough to genuinely worship Him with your heart, lips and actions?’ Would anyone be willing to share if they were able to do that and tell us how you feel about the results?” *If you closed last time’s study with a different question or application, substitute your closing for this one.*
   2. Tonight, between two miracles that Jesus performs we find the Pharisees demand a miraculous sign, for which they are flatly rejected. In fairness, Jesus wasn’t performing a miracle immediately in front of them when they asked. Equally fair is noting that Pharisees wouldn’t have bothered traveling into the countryside to see some country bumpkin preacher if they hadn’t heard the reports of his miraculous acts.
   3. What I invite you to find tonight is how God wants us to understand how much he understands our needs and how he wants to us to know we can focus on who he is because of his providential love.
   4. When we are done, each of us should have identified a need that God has satisfied and made a plan for how we can give God praise this week for that provision”
7. The study
   1. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 8:1-10
   2. Ask everyone to complete question 1 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
      1. “In the series of events Mark writes in verses 1 thru 10, what do you notice about…
         1. -Jesus?
            1. *Compassion for the crowd*
            2. *Admiration for their persistence*
            3. *Manifests more than enough food*
            4. *Thanked God*
         2. -the disciples?
            1. *Still not thinking about Jesus as God*
            2. *Served the crowd*
         3. -the crowd?
            1. *Large*
            2. *Not letting hunger keep them from following Jesus*
   3. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 8:11-21; Mt 16:11-12
   4. Ask “What differences do you see in how Jesus responds to the Pharisees and his disciples?”
      1. *The Pharisees get a refusal, the disciples get an explanation. If Jesus has shown multiple times that he will provide more than enough for the crowd, his disciples shouldn’t be anxious about their needs. See Matt 16:11-12 for another perspective on this event.*
   5. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 8:22-26
   6. Ask everyone to complete question 2 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
      1. “What do you notice about the healing of this blind man?”
         1. *Progressive, in two stages*
            1. *The initial partial healing may have been intended by Jesus to be a lesson for his disciples about their own incomplete understanding of who Jesus really is.*
         2. *Done in private. Jesus asked the man to keep it private.*
         3. *Used spit. ‘Lest we think the imagery of saliva wholly negative, though, we find a motif of its healing power. In several of his miracles of healing, Jesus used saliva (Mark 7:33 Mark 8:23; John 9:6), which fits with the Jewish and Hellenistic belief in the healing properties of saliva.’* *(Dictionary of Biblical Imagery)*
         4. *Sight ‘completely restored’ at the finish.*
   7. Ask “In these three events we’ve read about tonight do you find anything that they have in common?”
      1. *In each by word or example Jesus seems to be always faithful in trying to get his disciples to understand who he was.*
      2. *Jesus provides fully to those whose heart is seeking him.*
      3. *Jesus never makes light of or chastises human needs.*
   8. Ask everyone to complete question 3 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
      1. “Can you describe a time when Jesus met your need?” *Ideally, these answers come from the participants. Whether they get them from the study, the Sunday sermon or elsewhere, the best thing that can happen here is they are verbalized by the participants. If they struggle to answer…*
         1. *This is again a time of mutual encouragement. Please help your group participants share what God has done for them so that God’s name is praised.*
         2. *This is also practice helping people learn how to share these events outside the group.*
         3. *There may be someone who has a bitter experience to share where they feel God has failed to meet their need. Please don’t offer platitudes or easy answers to this person. Hear their story and pray for their understanding and encouragement. You need look no further than tonight’s text to understand that even for a heart that wants to follow Jesus, understanding that we don’t always understand can take a long time. Some disappointments are fierce.*
   9. Ask everyone to complete question 4 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
      1. “Please write down one way that you can give God praise this week for the way God has satisfied your need or needs. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you know how you should praise God for his provision.”
         1. *For the person who might have had a bitter experience with this, they might want to make a plan for how they might pray for new understanding and be encouraged by their experience. Jer 31:13*
8. Summary:
   1. Encourage your group members to apply the ideas or principles they developed from question 4. Plan on asking them next week about the results.
   2. Close in prayer

**Seeing**

Mark 8:1-26

1) In the series of events Mark writes in verses 1 thru 10, what do you notice about

-Jesus?

-the disciples?

-the crowd?

2) What do you notice about the healing of this blind man?

3) Can you describe a time when Jesus met your need?

4) Please write down one way that you can give God praise this week for the way God has satisfied your need or needs. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you know how you should praise God for his provision.

For next time... Read Mark 8:27-9:1