

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 reads 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- Dependent on the Lord -Learning from Failure

- 1) Scripture: Mark 9:14-29; Mark 6:7, 13;
 - A. Parallel accounts- Matt 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43a
- 2) Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should be able to identify a recent failure and develop a plan to learn a better way to navigate that situation.
- 3) Resources: Book of Mark, Grassmick. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Walvoord & Zuck
- 4) Preparation:
 - A. Pray for guidance
 - B. Review Leader's Notes and read entire lesson plan
- 5) Prayer requests & Open in prayer
- 6) Intro:
 - A. "Last time I asked you what can you do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as he seeks to transform you into the person God wants you to become? Would anyone be willing to share if you 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.*
 - B. "We all fail at something every day. Sometimes in spectacular, public ways. Sometimes in quiet desperation and in ways only known to God and ourselves. The consequences of those failures can range from fleeting embarrassment and inconvenience to lifelong trouble and disadvantage.
 - C. When we come into a life in Christ, the Holy Spirit begins the process of setting us apart for holy service to God. It starts then, but doesn't complete until this present, earthly life is done and we enter into Christ's presence. As long as we live this present life, God will be teaching us to be more like Christ and very often He will use our failures. As we learn from our failures, we shouldn't miss that we will leave any and all consequences of our failures behind when we meet Christ face to face. We can focus on the lesson of our failure instead of the failure itself because we will leave the failure in the past but take the lesson with us for always.
 - D. This passage illustrates the reality of living in the world in the absence of Jesus. The disciples try to do what they've done in the past without talking to God about it and get only futility and frustration for themselves and those they want to minister to. Let's learn from the disciple's failure.
 - E. When we are done, each of us should be able to identify a recent failure and make a plan to learn a better way to navigate that situation."

7) The study

A. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 9:14-29

B. 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.

i) "As you look at just Jesus' words in this passage (they might be the ones in red), how would you describe his attitude here?"

(1) *Frustrated, insulted, in charge, disheartened, compassionate*

ii) **Follow-up question.** "What do Jesus' displays of emotion tell you about his humanity and your own?"

(1) *Having emotions, experiencing doubt, failing, having to try again are part of the human condition.*

(2) *If these are good enough for Jesus, they're good enough for me.*

C. 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.

i) "Was it reasonable for the public to expect the disciples to heal those in need in Jesus' absence?"

(1) *They had been given and already exercised that authority. See Mark 6:7*

ii) **Follow-up question.** "Since the disciples had the authority to heal, what does Jesus' assessment of their failure in verse 29 imply about what they had done wrong?"

(1) *The disciples had failed because they had not prayerfully depended on God's power. Apparently, they had trusted in past successes (cf. 6:7,13) and had failed. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)*

D. Ask "What is it about embracing our failures that makes them such a good opportunity to learn?"

i) *Pride in our success can blind us to the source of our success. Humility in failure opens our eyes. We have far more teachable moments in our failures than in our successes.*

ii) *We try to repeat our successes by following the formula that worked but we analyze our failures for what we did wrong. Humility gives us the perspective to see that few of our failures are permanent. We can try again.*

iii) *The disciple's prior success and subsequent failure leaves them confused. They don't understand their failure. They needed to depend on God to heal and they needed Jesus to explain to them that they needed to depend on God to heal.*

- E. 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.
- i) “Has there been a time when felt like you had a situation fully in your control and then found out you didn’t? How might have depending on God more have changed how you felt and acted in that situation?” *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) *These can be anything. They might feel differently about their failure or lean into God fully for their success.*

- F. 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.
- i) “What recent failure has you most bothered? What specific way can you lean into God in order to learn a better way to navigate that situation?”

(1) *Worship, thankfulness, generosity, prayer, patience, grace.*

8) Summary:

- A. Encourage your group members to apply the ideas or principles they developed from question 4. Plan on asking them next week about the results.
- B. Close in prayer

Let's Go- Learning from Failure

Mark 9:14-29

1) As you look at just Jesus' words in this passage (they might be the ones in red), how would you describe his attitude here?

2) Was it reasonable for the public to expect the disciples to heal those in need in Jesus' absence?

3) Has there been a time when felt like you had a situation fully in your control and then found out you didn't? How might have depending on God more have changed how you felt and acted in that situation?

4) What recent failure has you most bothered? What specific way can you lean into God in order to learn a better way to navigate that situation?

For next time... Read Mark 9:30-50