

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- True Greatness

- 1) Scripture: Mark 9:30-50; 1 Sam 16:7; Rom 8:29-30
 - A. Parallel accounts- Matt 17:22 & 18:1-10; Luke 44b-50
- 2) Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should be able to identify the first, or the next, step they can take towards living a great life.
- 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 to identify a recent failure and make a plan to learn a better way to navigate that situation. 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. As Jesus turns towards Jerusalem and the culmination of his reason for coming, we find him preparing his disciples for the time to come. He mentions the suffering to come and he also tells his disciples what real greatness is and where to find the path to it. This passage can seem like a hodgepodge of teaching but if you focus on Jesus giving vital lessons for the rest of their lives you might find you're on your path to greatness.
 - C. When we are done, each of us should be able to describe the first, or the next, step we can take towards living a great life."
- 7) The study
 - A. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 9:30-32
 - i) *As his time with the disciples draws nearer to its end, notice how Jesus wants to focus on them and their preparation.*
 - 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) "Consider that Jesus knows all that must soon take place, the horror of his crucifixion, the struggles of his disciples, the defeat of Satan and the

redemption of his church. If you were one of his disciples and didn't really understand any of this, what one thing would you most want to know or understand?"

- (1) *Why does any of this have to happen? Who will lead us now? Have we followed you all this time for it to come to nothing? Now what?*

C. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 9:33-37

D. Ask "What does Jesus' response to the disciple's discussion about who is greater tell you about humanity's view of greatness and about God's?" See also 1 Sam 16:7

- i) *Jesus flips the idea of greatness on its head. Great people are usually served, they don't serve. (Bible Knowledge Comm)*
- ii) *God values different things than we naturally do. Jesus wants them to abandon the value system that develops in an unregenerated human nature and instead value what God values.*

E. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 9:38-50

- i) *This is hyperbole in the sense that it creates a false choice for the sake of illustrating Jesus' point. If there were only the two stark choices in life, eternal damnation or bodily self-mutilation, self-mutilation would be the better choice. Jesus has amply demonstrated that grace and forgiveness with redemption and personal growth are the path and choice he calls us to: Peter walking on the water, the Gerasene demoniac. Jesus hyperbolic choice illustrates the serious and immediate nature of our need to remove the sources of sin in our lives in the way a surgeon might remove a gangrenous body part to save someone's life.*

F. 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) "Looking at this passage from the perspective of someone who wants to follow Christ's teaching and help others do the same, what lessons or guidance do you find in this passage?"

(1) *Please discuss the answers your group members develop before you consider using the sample answers below.*

(a) *We aren't meant to police the behavior of every other person who ministers in the name of Christ.*

(b) *Be extremely careful that you don't lead others into sin.*

(c) *Remove sin and its sources from your life as quickly as possible.*

(d) *Expect to be tested in hard ways.*

- (e) *Live a life that helps those around you to embrace Christ.*
 - (f) *Choose peace over strife.*
- ii) **Follow-up question** “Of these lessons, which do you find to be the one you most fear applying to your life?”
 - (1) *This is a place for the group members to encourage each other to follow God's leading and to help each other be accountable for that.*
- G. 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) “Think for a moment about what it would look like for you to live a great life. Don’t worry about how you would make that happen. Instead, describe how it would look, what you might accomplish, how you might feel.” See also Rom 8:29-30
 - (1) *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.*
 - (2) *Unless they describe the life of Hitler, there are no wrong answers here and thus no sample answers. Please try to help your group members connect their ideas of a great life with God’s desire for them to have a great life.*

- H. 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 is the first step you can take towards greatness?”
 - (1) *Acknowledge that only dependence on God can lead you to true greatness.*
 - (2) *Identify the thoughts, behaviors, attitudes or habits that conflict with God’s values and need to be removed from your life.*
 - (3) *Take a step of faith that you could only do if you believed that God wants you to be great as Jesus has defined it.*

- 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- True Greatness

Mark 9:30-50

- 1) Consider that Jesus knows all that must soon take place, the horror of his crucifixion, the struggles of his disciples, the defeat of Satan and the redemption of his church. If you were one of his disciples and didn't really understand any of this, what one thing would you most want to know or understand?
 - 2) Looking at this passage from the perspective of someone who wants to follow Christ's teaching and help others do the same, what lessons or guidance do you find in this passage?
 - 3) Think for a moment about what it would look like for you to live a great life. Don't worry about how you would make that happen. Instead, describe how it would look, what you might accomplish, how you might feel.
 - 4) What is the first step you can take towards greatness?

For next time... Read Mark 10:1-12