

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE®**

Leader

Guide

ADULTS • KJV
FALL 2025

THE GREATEST TRUTHS OF ALL TIME
HOW TO HANDLE LIFE'S INTERRUPTIONS



LEADING SOMEONE TO THE GREATEST DECISION OF ALL

One of the great joys of leading a group in Bible study is seeing group members deepen their walk with Christ. Everyone's walk with Christ begins with an initial decision to follow Him in repentance and faith. People may be in your group who have not made that decision yet. Take advantage of your time with them to talk about becoming a Christian.

As you tell your own story about coming to Christ, share these key truths:

1. We are all sinners, and each of us needs to acknowledge that truth before God. That acknowledgement involves repentance, which is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Refer to Romans 3:23; 6:23, and Acts 3:19.
2. The only way a person can receive the gift of forgiveness is by faith in Jesus as God's Son. Use verses like Acts 4:12, Ephesians 2:8-9, and John 14:6 when talking about faith in Christ.
3. Confessing your faith in Jesus Christ means both believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth that He is Savior and Lord. Share Romans 10:9-10,13.

Invite the person to pray a prayer similar to this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner and have rebelled against You in many ways. I believe Jesus died for my sin and only through faith in His death and resurrection can I be forgiven. I now turn from my sin and ask Jesus to forgive me and to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will choose to follow Jesus. Thank You, Lord, for loving me and for forgiving me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

A Special Note about “The Greatest Gift” (pp. 46).

As your group studies and discusses this session, use it as an opportunity to lead unsaved group members and guests to faith in Christ. Use “The Perfect Gift” on the inside front cover of the Personal Study Guide [Daily Discipleship Guide] to connect the session with each member's own need to place their hope and trust in Christ and receive His gift of salvation. The inside cover is a guide for understanding how Jesus provides the one thing we truly need.

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DON'T MISS THIS!

Social Media

Connect with a community of *Bible Studies for Life* users. Post responses to questions, share teaching ideas, and link to great blog content. [Facebook.com/BibleStudiesforLife](https://www.facebook.com/BibleStudiesforLife)

eBook

Bible Studies for Life is also available as an eBook. You can order a copy at [lifeway.com/bsflebook](https://www.lifeway.com/bsflebook).

EXTRA!

Every week, you'll find additional discussion questions and creative teaching ideas to help you tailor each session to the needs of your group. You'll also find links to magazine articles and the *Family Connection* page for parents.

www.BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra

Family Connection

Family Connection helps parents connect with their students and kids by talking about what they're learning in their different Bible study groups. *Family Connection* makes it easy for parents to engage their children in spiritual conversation. *Family Connection* is available at [BibleStudiesforLife.com/FamilyConnection](https://www.BibleStudiesforLife.com/FamilyConnection).

Podcast

Get free weekly insights for every session of *Bible Studies for Life: Adults* with our podcast. Each 20-minute episode will help you get the most out of your upcoming study. Listen at the gym, on the drive home, or wherever is best for you. Just search "Bible Studies for Life Adults" on your favorite podcast app to start listening today.

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WELCOME

A change of season is upon us! For many of us, Fall means getting back into a routine, and a valuable part of any routine is a regular connection with others around God's Word. The book you are holding will help you do just that.

This issue includes two studies built on our plan for discipleship and growing deeper in our walk with Christ. The study "The Greatest Truths of All Time" will help us engage with Scripture and we hit upon the central themes that run through all of God's Word. The second study, "How to Handle Life's Interruptions," helps us deepen our obedience to God, because life's interruptions are a good indicator of who is in charge of our lives. This study pushes us to obediently trust God rather than our own plans.

I encourage you to read a little more about the plan and strategy behind Bible Studies for Life. Check out pages 8, 62, and 129 to see how these studies will contribute to your walk with Christ.

Enjoy the time you spend reading these studies built on God's Word. And may God richly bless your time with your Bible study group!

Brian Gass

Content Editor, *Bible Studies for Life*

HOW TO USE BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

INVITE THE HOLY SPIRIT’S GUIDANCE

Because God is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to be the best facilitator for your group. Read the Bible passage several times with the Holy Spirit showing you its meaning and application.

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

Then read the Personal Study Guide. Its content provides the foundation and direction for the Bible discussion and study by your group.

LEADER GUIDE

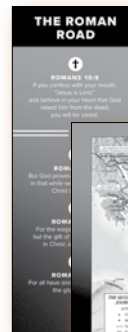
Follow the simple directives in the group plan. This plan will guide you in engaging your group in discussion around the Bible passage. Read the commentary to help you understand the passage. Share insights from the commentary as needed during the group discussion. Occasionally you will see a QR code in this book. Use your phone to open that QR code to see bonus digital content.

LEADER PACK

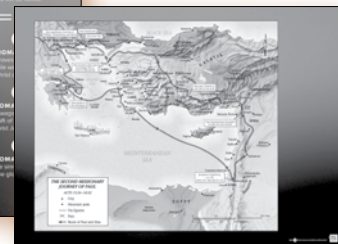
The optional Leader Pack is designed to enhance the group experience, especially for visual learners. Pull in the Leader Pack items as referenced in the group plan.

The Leader Pack also provides access to a variety of digital files, including:

- JPG files of the two main study images that you can use with any presentation software (ie., PowerPoint). (Promote the study by placing these images into an announcement slideshow or display the images during the sessions to reinforce the study topic.)
- PDF file of each pack item. (Create multiple posters; during your sessions, display images on a screen using any presentation software; post images on social media to promote the study.)
- Sample Twitter® and email messages to post prior to your Bible study time to raise awareness and promote the session topic.
- An electronic version of the group plans that you can customize and print.
- Promotional videos to introduce both of the studies in this quarter.
- *Biblical Illustrator* articles that allow you to go deeper in your study.



Posters

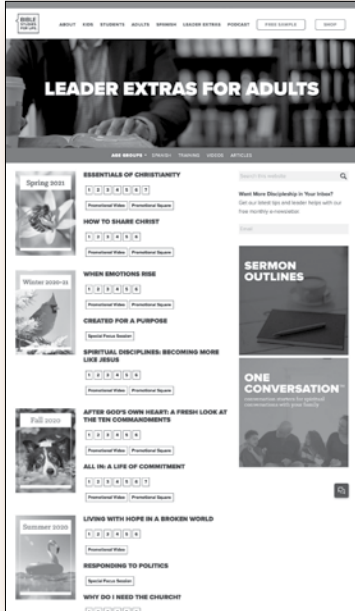


Handouts





To learn how to best use these resources, watch this brief video.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Additional discussion questions and teaching suggestions for leaders are available online at www.BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra.

A twenty-minute podcast is available for each session, providing an overview and insights to help you prepare. Search “Bible Studies for Life Adults” on your favorite podcast app or go to MinistryGrid.com/BibleStudiesforLife.

PREPARE YOUR GROUP MEMBERS

Encourage your group members to read the *Personal Study Guide* prior to the group meeting. (Some group members will prefer to read it after the meeting as a way to follow up and reflect.)

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GO DEEPER

The *Advanced Bible Study* is written for group members who desire more extensive commentary. It includes exposition of each session’s Scripture passage, an examination of key words, an introduction to the setting of the passage and biblical life and times, questions to guide the study, and interactive responses to help readers apply God’s truths to their lives today.



What Preschoolers Taught Me About Leading Adults

By Dwayne McCrary

One of the more desired rewards to earn in a preschool class is being the line leader. The first thing children will reveal to their parents at the end of the day is that they got to be the line leader that day. They won the prize by setting an example for the rest to follow. In most cases, the line leader is the one exhibiting the behavior desired by the teacher. In some cases, the child is selected by the teacher, who hopes the child will exhibit the desired behavior. Either way, the line leader sets the standard for that day.

When we accepted the role of leading an ongoing Bible study group, we became the line leader for that group. It is even possible that we too shared with our parents that we are a group leader! Let's think about how the line leader in a preschool class helps us understand our role as an adult group leader.

SETS THE EXAMPLE

As already stated, the line leader serves as an example for everyone else to follow. That is how he got to be the line leader in the first place. The other preschoolers know that the line leader represents the expectations for the rest of the class.

When we accepted the role of a group leader, we also accepted the responsibility of representing what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus. That willingness to follow Jesus should be one thing that qualifies us to be the group leader. Following matters.



As strange as this may seem, the title of leader is earned by a willingness to follow. The preschooler follows the expectations defined by their teacher, and adult group leaders follows the expectations defined by the Teacher. Following makes us capable of leading.

One of the roles we play as the group leader is maintaining a focus on reaching those far from God.

FOCUSES ON THE TASK

The preschool line leader focuses on the assigned task, which can include holding on to the rope, walking with purpose, and arriving at a specific destination. Holding the rope may be the biggest challenge for the line leader because children often let go of the rope as they make their way down a hall or through a group of other preschoolers.

Lots of distractions exist that can take the attention of an adult Bible study group as well. We can become focused on physical needs, world events, and class socials, and forget about some of the larger items. None of these are bad if they do not become the primary focus of the group.

One of the roles we play as the group leader is maintaining a focus on reaching those far from God. This focus includes challenging ourselves to be more intentional in praying for those far from God and making sure our group does the same. If we lose sight of the main thing, so will everyone else in our group.

BRINGS OTHERS ALONG

The preschool line leader brings others along for a walk. She encourages other classmates to grab the rope and join her in the journey. She also helps those who get disconnected and lose their grip to reconnect. She makes sure everyone arrives safely.

As adult Bible study group leaders, we get to encourage others to join our group, so they can discover some biblical truths together. We may be called upon to contact others struggling and in danger of becoming stragglers. We want to do our best to give everyone an opportunity to arrive safely.

Everyone arriving safely may mean we add a second “rope” and show others how to be a group leader. We then can make room for more people to grab part of the rope. Apprenticing others to become great line leaders may be more important than we realize. There really is no better way for another person to become a great line leader than learning from those already doing it.

We have the privilege of being line leaders for the Bible study group we lead. We can set an example, help the group remain focused, and bring others with us for the journey. We make our heavenly Father proud when we serve well as a line leader.

Dwayne McCrary is the manager of adult ongoing Bible studies at Lifeway.

THE PATHWAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Growing in Christ is a journey—a lifelong journey—but what does that look like? Lifeway’s research reveals eight markers consistently present in the lives of believers who are growing spiritually. Each year, *Bible Studies for Life* engages all eight of these areas. Following this intentional plan for discipleship ensures progress on the pathway to becoming more like Christ.

Visit www.BibleStudiesforLife.com for a fuller picture of this discipleship plan through 2026.

	FALL 2025	WINTER 2025-26	SPRING 2026	SUMMER 2026
ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE	The Greatest Truths of All Time			
OBEY GOD & DENY SELF	How to Handle Life’s Interruptions			
EXERCISE FAITH		Limited Resources, Limitless God		
SHARE CHRIST		Sharing Jesus in a Post-Christian World		
SEEK GOD			God Is: Understanding the Character of God	
LIVE UNSASHAMED			Seize the Day: Embracing a Mission with Purpose	
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS				Connecting with Others Like Jesus Did
SERVE GOD AND OTHERS				Essentials for Christian Living

THE GREATEST TRUTHS OF ALL TIME

How this study supports the Discipleship Plan:

ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE. The six great subjects in this study hit upon the central themes that run through all of Scripture.

- Session 1 **The Greatest Name** • Isaiah 42:1-12
- Session 2 **The Greatest Need** • Luke 5:17-26
- Session 3 **The Greatest Sin** • Matthew 12:22-32
- Session 4 **The Greatest Gift** • Romans 5:6-11,18-21
- Session 5 **The Greatest Command** • Mark 12:28-34
- Session 6 **The Greatest Return** • 1 Thessalonians 4:16–5:8

HOW TO HANDLE LIFE'S INTERRUPTIONS

How this study supports the Discipleship Plan:

OBEY GOD AND DENY SELF. Our response to life's interruptions is a good indicator of who is in charge of our lives. This study pushes us to obediently trust God rather than our own plans.

- Session 1 **When God Interrupts Your Life** • Hebrews 11:8-19
- Session 2 **When Life Goes Terribly Wrong** • Genesis 39:21-23; 40:5-8; 41:10-14
- Session 3 **When Your Actions Cause an Interruption** • Exodus 2:11-22; 3:5-10
- Session 4 **When Well-Meaning People Interrupt Your Plans** • Luke 8:40-50,54-56
- Session 5 **When a Time of Inactivity Slows You Down** • Acts 1:4-8,12-14; 2:1-4
- Session 6 **When Doing God's Work Is Interrupted** • Acts 16:4-15

A black and white photograph of a person holding a black Bible. The Bible is held in front of the person's face, which is blurred in the background. The text 'HOLY BIBLE' is printed in white, serif, all-caps font on the front cover of the Bible. The person's hands are visible, holding the Bible from the sides. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt. On the left wrist, a watch with a light-colored strap is visible. On the right hand, a simple ring is worn on the ring finger. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

HOLY BIBLE

THE GREATEST TRUTHS

We live in a world obsessed with goats. Not the farm animals, but the acronym that refers to the Greatest Of All Time [G.O.A.T.]. We love to determine who is the greatest player in a given sport, or the greatest president, car, invention, and discovery in history. It's both fascinating and trivial, depending on your personal interests.

One GOAT list that's not trivial but worthy of study is what could be called the Greatest Scriptural Truths of All Time. This unit will dive into six of the greatest themes throughout the totality of Scripture. These six greatest truths are a must-know to anyone who calls Jesus their Savior, or is searching for truth and meaning in this life and the next.

These themes aren't trivial but are eternal, with the power to transform a person from death to life, darkness to light, and night to day. Join us as we study God's Word together.



Study Introduction:

Here's why this six-session study is important.

AUTHOR

Jeff Shultz is pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Baltimore, MD. He is a disciple of Jesus, husband, father, and grandfather. When not pastoring, he enjoys his family and is a basketball referee.

COMMENTARY WRITER

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The Greatest Name

THE POINT

There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.

THE PASSAGE

Isaiah 42:1-12

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Names are important. It's rare to see boys named Judas or Damien, or hear Jezebel tossed around as a possible girl's name. Instead, names are chosen to inspire and encourage.

I have inherited a great name, at least my surname. My first name is altogether different. I was named after a soap opera character my mom thought was cute, who was also killed off the show shortly after my birth. Not a great start.

My grandfather and father lived lives that brought respect and honor to the last name I inherited. More than a few times, I was referred to as so-and-so's grandson or son, with great pride. Just before I left college, my dad told me to never forget who I was and whose name I carry. Big challenge, but gladly accepted.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of a coming "Servant" who would represent God. We now know that Servant by the name of Jesus. His mission was to represent God and His name accurately and to bring honor and glory to that name.

Let's discover how Isaiah said Jesus would do that.





5 MINUTES

GET INTO THE STUDY

LEADER PACK: Display **Pack Item 1**, “The Greatest Truths of all Time” poster, to introduce the major theme of this study, along with the focus of each session.

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, play a video clip of highlights from a great athlete. Then ask **Question #1**.

NOTE: A video option can be found at BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra.

DISCUSS: **Question #1** on page 11 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **In your opinion, who is the greatest name in the field of sports, literature, or film?**

GUIDE: Direct the group to **The Bible Meets Life** on page 11 of the PSG. Introduce the importance of bringing honor and glory to God by reading or summarizing the text or by encouraging people to read it on their own.

RECAP: The prophet Isaiah spoke of a coming “Servant” who would represent God. We now know that Servant by the name of Jesus. His mission was to represent God and His name accurately and to bring honor and glory to that name. Let’s discover how Isaiah said Jesus would do that.

GUIDE: Call attention to **The Point** on page 11 of the PSG: **There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.**

PRAY: Transition into the study by thanking God for revealing Himself to us with His great name. Ask Him to help the group learn to honor Him as He deserves.



TIP: When helpful, use this “Notes” column to record additional discussion questions, concepts, and activities that connect the study content with your specific group.

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES

NOTES

ISAIAH 42:1-4

¹ Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

² He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. ⁴ He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

READ: Ask someone to read Isaiah 42:1-4 aloud from page 12 of the PSG.

RECAP: Isaiah 42 contains the first of four “Servant Songs” describing the coming Messiah. Isaiah is often called the prince of prophets. His tenure as prophet spanned four kings and almost sixty years, dating from 740–680 B.C. His book has the most sweeping prophecies of our Messiah, covering everything from how He would enter the world to how He would leave it. The book has been referred to as the fifth gospel, and even its name means “Jehovah is salvation.”

GUIDE: Use the commentary for the verses on the next page of the Leader Guide to give further background on Isaiah the prophet.

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the main points from page 13 of the PSG. Two themes fill the rest of these verses: judgment and humility. Judgment is mentioned three times. The Servant will:

- **Bring forth judgment to the Gentiles (v. 1).** The nations include the Gentiles.
- **Bring forth judgment unto truth (v. 3).** He will be true to the Father’s purpose.
- **Set judgment in the earth (v. 4).** He will not be disheartened until His work is finished.

The word for judgment, *mishpawt*, means “a fair judgment” or “to set things right.” The Servant is to set things right between God and all His rebellious children.

PRAY: As individuals consider God’s justice, stop to pray about the current state of injustice in our world. Invite each person to share specific examples in their prayers and ask God to intervene in each case.

DISCUSS: Question #2 on page 13 of the PSG: **What hope do these verses give you about the Servant’s mission?**

TRANSITION: God brings glory to His name through His chosen One. In the next verses, we see that God’s name deserves glory for the purpose and relationship He offers.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:
What would divine justice look like?

ISAIAH 42:1-4 *Commentary*

Connection to The Point: God has empowered His chosen Servant to bring His justice to the earth.

Isaiah the prophet. The eighth-century BC prophet Isaiah wrote the book. His name means “Yahweh saves.” Isaiah ministered in the Southern Kingdom of Judah although he also prophesied concerning the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Isaiah’s wife is called “the prophetess” (Isa. 8:3). Isaiah had at least two sons. Their symbolic names conveyed warnings to God’s people: (1) Shear-jashub means “a remnant will return.” (2) Maher-shalal-hash-baz means “the spoil speeds, the prey hastens.” Themes that Isaiah emphasized include the Lord’s sovereignty and His holiness.

The Setting. Isaiah’s prophecies include the coming of the Messiah both as a righteous King (see chaps. 9; 11; 32) and as a Suffering Servant. Beginning with chapter 40, Isaiah prophesied concerning the comfort and hope the Lord would give His people (40:1-2). Chapter 42 contains the first of what biblical scholars have identified as Servant Songs or poems. These songs consist of Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13–53:12. The poems reach their pinnacle in chapters 52–53 where the Servant suffers not for any wrong He has done but rather for the sins of others. The songs find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

My servant/mine elect (v. 1). The term *servant* designates the Messiah in key passages in the latter part of the book of Isaiah (see “The Setting”). These Servant Songs are fulfilled in Jesus. Many Bible scholars identify Isaiah 61:1-3 as a fifth Servant Song although the term *servant* does not appear in the passage. In any case these verses describe the role of the Messiah. Jesus read this passage as His text for His initial sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21). After reading these words from the scroll of Isaiah, Jesus announced their fulfillment in Him. The word translated *elect* often has theological overtones and primarily expresses a choosing that has ultimate and eternal significance. It is used of God’s choice of Israel and can also be rendered “elected.”

God brings glory to His name through His elect Servant. As His crucifixion approached, Jesus prayed for Himself, for His disciples, and for all believers (John 17:1-26). In

John 17:1-5 Jesus prayed that God would glorify Him so that He might glorify God. Jesus did indeed glorify God by completing the work that God had given Him to do. Involved in that work is the provision of eternal life.

Bring forth judgment to the Gentiles (v. 1). The Servant’s mission involved *bringing forth judgment* not only to Israel or Judah, but also to the *Gentiles*. The Hebrew word translated *Gentiles* can also be rendered “nations.” In the Old Testament the term increasingly comes to designate non-believing peoples who were not in covenant relationship with the Lord. The Hebrew word rendered *judgment* can convey a broad range of meanings. It refers to all functions of governing, not only judicial processes but also executive and legislative roles.

A bruised reed/smoking flax (v. 3). These terms suggest items that appear weak and useless. The common reed grew in shallow water or wet salty sand. The plumed flower that formed its head may have constituted the staff handed to Jesus as a form of mockery (Matt. 27:29). Lamp wicks were typically made of twisted flax. Lights symbolically depicted life in abundance in biblical times in contrast to death and darkness. A *smoking flax* refers to one burning with smoke but without flame. Both *reed* and *flax* images suggest that although the Servant possessed royal power, He would not use it in a damaging way. The expressions depict the gentle nature of the Servant’s ministry.

The isles shall wait for his law (v. 4). The same Hebrew term designates both *coasts* and *islands*. This phrase *Isles* refers to distant nations and thus functions as a way of referring to all nations. The entire world will one day heed the Lord’s *law*. The Hebrew term rendered *law* is often written in English as *Torah*. The word basically means “teaching” or “law.” Motivated by His love, the Lord revealed to human beings basic insight into how to have a relationship with Him and with one another. In the Scriptures, the term encompasses both the moral law and the ceremonial law. The word’s meaning later expanded to include the first five books of the Old Testament, an inspired record that includes history, regulations, and exhortations.

STUDY THE BIBLE



15 MINUTES

NOTES

ISAIAH 42:5-8

⁵ Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

⁶ I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; ⁷ To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. ⁸ I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

READ: Ask someone to read Isaiah 42:5-8 aloud from page 13 of the PSG.

RECAP: Signatures on a mortgage make bold promises, namely, to repay the money borrowed for the purchased house. To verify the validity of this promise, the person must be confirmed as trustworthy and able to keep their word. Promises were made concerning the Servant whom Isaiah's audience was to behold. He would bring justice to the nations. Verses 5-8 are the verification, or credit check, of the promise maker.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for the verses on the next page of the Leader Guide to explain the Servant's role as a light to the nations.

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the main points from page 14 of the PSG. The Servant would:

- Open blind eyes,
- Bring out prisoners from the prison,
- Bring out those in the darkness.

Jesus, the Servant, fulfilled these words some 700 years later. He opened the eyes of the blind and set the prisoner spiritually free.

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): Use the **Phone** option on page 25 of this Leader Guide to give each person an opportunity to research idols from history or around the world. Then ask **Question #3**.

DISCUSS: Question #3 on page 14 of the PSG: **In what ways do you see people giving glory to idols instead of to God?**

DISCUSS: Question #4 on page 14 of the PSG: **How should we respond to God's great work in our world and in our lives?**

TRANSITION: In the next verses, we see that God's name deserves glory from all people.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

Which of the metaphors about the Servant's actions have you seen play out in others' lives?

ISAIAH 42:5-8 *Commentary*

Connection to The Point: God is the sovereign Creator who alone deserves glory. He has purposed to work through His Servant to bring us into a covenant relationship.

He that created the heavens (v. 5). The descriptive words in verse 5 emphasize the power and sovereignty behind God's words recorded in verse 6. The expression *he created the heavens* calls to mind the first words of Scripture (Gen. 1:1). God displayed His power at creation by simply speaking the universe and its contents into being. The Hebrew word translated *created (bara')* is the same verb that appears in Genesis 1:1, 21, and 27. The basic form of the word is limited to divine activity. Only God is identified as the subject who creates. Because the verb never occurs with the mention of any material used in creating and because the main emphasis falls on the newness of what has been created, the clear implication is that of creation out of nothing.

Give thee (v. 6). God appointed His Servant for a specific purpose. The Hebrew verb conveys three broad areas of meaning: (1) to give, (2) to put, set, appoint, and (3) to make, constitute. The same verb occurs in Isaiah 42:1 where the Lord stated that He had "put" His Spirit on the Servant. The Lord's putting His Spirit on the Servant enabled the Servant to perform His divinely appointed task. In verse 1 the task is described as bringing justice to the nations. In verse 6 the responsibility is identified as being "a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."

A covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles (v. 6). A *covenant* is a treaty, agreement, or contract between nations or individuals. The parties may be equal in power or one party may be superior. The action of making a covenant in the Old Testament sometimes employs the idiom "to cut a covenant." The statement "the LORD made a covenant with Abram" (Gen. 15:18) more literally reads "the *Lord* cut a covenant with Abram." The events in Genesis 15:7-21 provide background for the expression "to cut a covenant." In the covenant-making process the Lord required Abram to bring certain animals, cut them in half, and place the halves opposite one another. The parties making the covenant then walked between the pieces, thereby likely signifying what would happen to

them if they failed to uphold their part of the agreement. A smoking fire pot and a flaming torch representing the Lord passed between the divided animals in Genesis 15, thus signifying that the Lord's covenant with Abram was an unconditional covenant that He would fulfill.

The Lord's covenant with Abram or Abraham included not only the promise to make his descendants a great nation (Israel) but also the pledge to bless all peoples through the patriarch (Gen. 12:1-3). The Lord's promise to make the Servant "*a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*" informs us that the Servant cannot be simply identified with Israel because the Servant has a mission to Israel. The expression *of the people* suggests an orderly relationship between the Lord and people already possessing His revelation (the Israelites or Jews). The phrase *for a light of the Gentiles* implies the widening of the scope of revelation to include all nations or Gentiles. Thus, this passage apparently depicts the Servant's role in establishing a new covenant, a promise fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 26:27-28).

To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison (v. 7). These words call to mind Jesus's reading from the scroll of Isaiah in the Nazareth synagogue at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:16-21). Although He read Isaiah 61:1-2 from the Septuagint, a major Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the passage included the Servant's role of opening blind eyes and setting prisoners free. While Jesus did heal people of physical blindness, His primary mission was spiritual. Freeing prisoners suggests conquest of captors and thus kingship. Opening blind eyes involves spiritual enlightenment. Thus, the Servant's mission included giving both liberty and light.

I am the LORD. That is my name (v. 8). The title *LORD*, typically printed in both large and small capital letters, distinguishes the Hebrew word often written in English as *Yahweh* from another Hebrew word that means "Lord." God revealed the significance of this title to Moses at the burning bush when He responded to Moses's request to know God's name with the expression, "I Am That I Am" (Ex. 3:14). The designation is derived from the Hebrew verb "to be" and denotes God as the self-existent, covenant God who acts independently of outside influences.

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES

NOTES

ISAIAH 42:9-12

⁹ Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. ¹⁰ Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. ¹¹ Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. ¹² Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

DO: Direct each person to **Engage** with “Jesus, the Servant” on page 15 of the PSG (page 25 of this Leader Guide) to help them give praise to God.

READ: Ask someone to read Isaiah 42:9-12 aloud from page 16 of the PSG.

RECAP: The Lord, still speaking in verse 9, reminded His people once again why they could trust His promises. To highlight this, God called them to remember events that had already transpired.

“Before they spring forth” (v. 9) carries the idea of a plant or grass blade breaking through the surface and suddenly appearing out of the ground. It’s the result of hidden work below the surface. There’s little doubt that this new thing is the work of the Servant we know to be Jesus.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for the verses on the next page of the Leader Guide to give further background on the new song prophesied.

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the main points from page 16 of the PSG. Who will sing this new song? It will be sung by all people and from all places:

- Sailors who go down to the seas,
- Island dwellers,
- Nomadic desert wanderers,
- City and mountain lovers.

DISCUSS: Question #5 on page 16 of the PSG: **How would you describe the new song God has put in your heart?**

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): Use the **Song** option on page 25 of this Leader Guide to give people an opportunity to praise God through song.

GUIDE: Refer back to **The Point** for this session: **There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.**

ALTERNATE QUESTION:
What past and future events stir you to give God glory and praise?

ISAIAH 42:9-12 *Commentary*

Connection to The Point: Because of what God has done, we are to give Him glory and praise.

Former things . . . new things (v. 9). The expression *former things* could refer to previous prophecies in Isaiah that had already been fulfilled. It might also designate all the Old Testament prophecies that had already come to pass, including the exodus from Egypt (Gen. 48:21; 50:24). The new things the Lord announced probably encompass the deliverance from exile as well as the predicted ministry of the Servant.

New song (v. 10). The *new song* is a song of praise occasioned by the Servant's work. The reference to a new song implies the existence of an old one. Verse 13 suggests that the old or previous song may have been the one the Israelites sang when the Lord delivered them from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 15:1-18 and compare 15:3 with Isa. 42:13). Thus, the Servant's work of which Isaiah prophesied may include a new exodus and a great victory over God's enemies. It will include deliverance from the bondage of sin.

The end of the earth (v. 10). Because of the new events that God was bringing about through His Servant, the prophet called people to praise Him from the *end of the earth*. This expression denotes the extremity. Sometimes it is a poetic reference to distant places. The phrase also is a significant recurring theological theme in the Old Testament. It appears in Deuteronomy 28:49 to identify the source of Israel's judgment when the people forsake the Lord. In Psalm 61:2 David voiced the expression in describing the extent of his suffering. In Psalm 65:5 he declared God as "the confidence of all the ends of the earth." And in Isaiah 49:6 the Lord used the expression in announcing that His Servant would provide salvation for both Jews and Gentiles.

Kedar . . . the rock (v. 11). The designation *Kedar* means "mighty," "black," or "swarthy." The man named Kedar is first mentioned in Genesis 25:13. He was a son of Ishmael and grandson of Abraham. Apparently a tribe developed from this individual. The Kedarites inhabited the area south of biblical Palestine and east of Egypt.

These nomadic peoples raised sheep, goats, and camels, which they sold to Tyre (Ezek. 27:21). The Kedarites also were well-known for their warriors, especially their archers (Isa. 21:17).

The term *rock* is also translated as "Sela" (CSB, NIV). It was a major fortified city located in Edom. Amaziah, king of Judah in the eighth-century BC, captured Sela and renamed it Joktheel (2 Kings 14:7). Sela has traditionally been identified with Petra, Edom's capital, or with the nearby Umm al-Bayyara in the Wadi Musa. More recently scholars have placed it at es-Sela, five miles southwest of Tafileh and two and one-half miles northwest of Bozrah. The two sites of Kedar and the rock together represent isolated desert and mountainous areas.

Glory (vv. 8,12). The term translated *glory* comes from a Hebrew verb meaning "to be heavy." It designates the weighty importance and the shining majesty that accompany the Lord's presence. The term also can refer to the very reality of His presence. Verse 8 reveals that the Lord will share His glory with no one else. There is none with the reputation for greatness that God alone deserves not only because He is Creator and King but also because He is Savior and Deliverer. Nowhere is the reality and splendor of His presence and character seen more than in the person of His Son (Isa. 4:2; John 1:14).

The greatest name. In the ancient world a *name* expressed essence, character, and nature. Knowing someone's name implied a relationship between the two individuals. For God to reveal His name indicates His desire to enter into personal relationship with human beings, whom He created in His image. God's name deserves glory because of the relationship He offers. By believing in the name or nature and power of Jesus as the Son of God, we experience salvation. There is no other name or person to whom we can turn for salvation (Acts 4:12). Thus God has given Jesus a name above every name. And one day every tongue will confess that Jesus's name is the greatest name (Phil. 2:9-11).

LIVE IT OUT



5 MINUTES

NOTES

GUIDE: Direct people to page 17 of the PSG: There is only one God and only His name deserves glory. Choose one of the following applications:

- **Memorize.** Commit Philippians 2:9-11 to memory. Reflect on those words and ask God to show how you can live under His lordship each day.
- **Write.** The Bible speaks of a new song. Write a hymn, poem, or spoken word thanking the Lord for His faithfulness in the past and His promises for the future. Share this work with others or use it in your personal worship to glorify God.
- **Encourage.** There are many bruised people in our communities. Someone you know is going through a hard time. Send this person a note of encouragement with a promise from God of His faithfulness.

WRAP IT UP

TRANSITION: Read or restate **The Point** for this session: **There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.**

PRAY: Thank God for the blessing of being His child. Ask Him to give us boldness and opportunity to proclaim His great name.



Free additional ideas for your group are available at BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra

ENGAGE

Jesus, the Servant. Consider these prophetic descriptions of Jesus in Isaiah 42 and how they relate to you. Place a checkmark next to the ones that are particularly meaningful to you right now. Then write a prayer of praise for Jesus, the Servant.

- I honor Jesus as God's Servant.
- I actively value the strength of Jesus.
- I know that in the end Jesus will bring justice.
- God delights in Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is the One chosen by the Father.
- Jesus never grows weak.
- The Spirit of God is on Jesus.

My Prayer:

BONUS CONTENT

PHONE ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, invite each person to use their smart phones to research idols from history or around the world. Follow up with **Question #3**, looking for similarities to our modern culture.

SONG ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, play a worship song to give people an opportunity to praise God through song.

NOTE: A video option can be found at BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra.

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