

LEADER GUIDE

Overview and course design

This guide provides directions for a seven-session group study. The video sessions may also be purchased from *lifeway.com* for streaming. Though you can do the study using only the print, it is designed to watch the video teaching sessions and then do the print study.

Group sessions require a minimum of one hour, preferably 90 minutes for adequate discussion time. Some groups may choose a more flexible schedule such as viewing and discussing the video one week and discussing the print study the next. Note the varying video session lengths from 29 to 50 minutes. By design the wrap-up session is brief. Your group will complete their study in the workbook. Then the final session is a review and a personal word of encouragement and appreciation to the group. You may choose to use the bonus video segments as a fun way to conclude the study with your group.

If your group is too large for effective group discussion, watch the video as a large group. Then do your discussion in smaller groups. Enlist and prepare small group leaders. This guide is primarily for the small group facilitator.

Beginning a Bible Study Group

- Pray for God's leadership; ask for His help in all arrangements, including bringing to the study those people who have a hunger to press forward in their walk with God.
- Reserve your meeting place and time. Arrange for childcare if needed.
- Promote the study in your church and community. The promotional video segments can be used for in-church promotion as well as broadcast on local television. You may choose to offer an opportunity for women to preregister for the study to get a preliminary count. Have member books available for participants at the first small-group session.
- Arrange to have a DVD player in your meeting room each week.
- Enlist group facilitators for the number of groups you anticipate.

Responsibilities of Facilitators

Prayer

Pray for your group as a whole, for individual members, for your leadership of the group, and that members will hear and obey God.

Time and Preparation

Honor participants time by beginning and ending on time. Be prepared to facilitate the group. Complete each week's assignments and preview the video sessions. You do not have to have all the answers, but you need to be familiar with the content. Before the first session look through the entire book to familiarize yourself with the content and Bible study method. Review the introduction and be ready to explain to group members what they can expect from the study.

Safe Discussion Group

Establish a safe learning and sharing environment where no one is intimidated and no one dominates the group.

Lead the Sessions

Let the group know you will facilitate the session—not lecture—and that you don't know everything about the subject. You will guide the group as you help each other learn about the material they studied during the week.

Session One

Shackle Free

1. Have group members introduce themselves by sharing in one minute an interesting journey they've taken. Introduce yourself first and give members an example to follow.
2. Welcome members to the study. Pay particular attention to newcomers. Thank participants for their attendance.
3. Overview the course. Explain that the goal is life change, not just study. Their individual, daily study will begin the process of application and the small-group discussion will continue the process. Share that together you will discuss concepts you studied during the week, flesh out the concepts, and encourage each other on the journey.
4. Direct members to page 6 for the first session viewer guide. You have permission to copy the viewer guide pages for those who are visiting a session or who are deciding if they want to join the group.
5. Watch video session 1 [36:41], completing viewer guide on pages 6-7.

6. Discuss insights and challenges members gained from the session. Possible discussion questions include:
 - a. How do you feel about joining in the quest to be one in a million?
 - b. What do you think of when you think of abundance?
 - c. What is the difference between perfection and satisfaction?
 - d. From the list of promised-land living list Priscilla read (page 160) what two or three descriptions most appeal to you?
 - e. How does the story of Jenny speak to you?
 - f. What is the danger of Christianity as something you do?
 - g. Have you ever placed faith in Christ for the remission of your sin? Are you hanging out in any of the places where the enemy reigns?
7. Encourage members to complete their study and to pray for each other daily. Dismiss with prayer.

Session Two

Welcome to the Wilderness

1. Greet and encourage members as they arrive. Open with prayer. Refer to your list of discussion questions. Share the page number as you ask each question so members can refer back to their responses. Possible questions include:
 - a. Do you agree that many born-again believers never experience the fullness of God (p. 9)? If so, why?
 - b. What adjectives would you use to describe the life of an individual living in bondage to sin (p. 11)?
 - c. In what ways do you think lifestyle sin differs from original sin?
 - d. Brainstorm in your group practical ways we can reprogram our thinking to fully enjoy God's freedom (p. 15).
 - e. In a time when you became your own worst enemy, what did you say or think that impeded your spiritual progress (p. 18)?
 - f. How do the strong flavors and smells of Egypt's food contribute to our bondage (p. 18)?
 - g. What specific things is God asking you to leave behind so you can more closely follow Him (p. 20)?
 - h. Brainstorm ways to guard yourself and your family from the trends that reflect the Enemy's work in our culture (p. 22).
2. Show session 2 video [29:40]. If time permits, discuss insights or challenges members gained from the session. Possible questions include:
 - a. Why do you think God deliberately chooses the wilderness for us?
 - b. What tempts us to hide our incredible nature and be like others?

- c. How does it feel to be attending the “Oxford and Cambridge of God’s students?”
 - d. How is the wilderness a favor God is doing for us?
3. Encourage group members to do their study this week. Close with prayer.

Session Three

EXPERIENCING GOD

1. Greet members. Open with prayer.
2. Lead discussion. Possible questions include:
 - a. When wilderness seasons come in your life or a friend’s life, what or whom do you assume to be the source (p. 34)?
 - b. How would you feel if facing the desert on foot when a more convenient route obviously existed (p. 34)?
 - c. How does the fact that our trials have purpose alter your view of God’s care (p. 35)?
 - d. Why do you think prioritizing intimacy with God can be difficult for today’s Christian (p. 40)?
 - e. Do you have a \$500 story to share with the group (p. 42)?
 - f. What are some practical ways that you remember God’s goodness in lean times? Where do you see yourself in your walk with God right now (p. 43)?
 - g. What do you see as the toughest parts of your wilderness journey right now? What evidences do you see in the midst of it (p. 44)?
 - h. What have the frustrations and interruptions of the wilderness revealed to you about your heart’s intentions (p. 45)?
 - i. If you found yourself in the Israelites’ sandals in Exodus 15, how would you describe your attitude (p. 51)?
3. Show session 3 video [49:21]. If time permits, discuss. Possible questions:
 - a. How have you experienced being desensitized to some aspect of your relationship with God?
 - b. How does the unpredictability of God challenge you and how does it make you love Him?
 - c. In what circumstances do you need God’s command not to fear?
 - d. What kinds of fears paralyze you if you don’t trust God?
 - e. How do we want to do God’s part instead of our part in situations?
 - f. How difficult do you find it to “stand there,” to “be silent”?
4. Encourage group members to do their study this week. Close with prayer.

Session Four

SEEING HIM AT SINAI

1. Greet members. Open with prayer.
2. Lead discussion. Possible questions include:
 - a. What is your definition of a miracle (p. 58)?
 - b. How have you felt when God's directions seemed to be opposite the way you were headed (p. 59)?
 - c. What are the dangers of looking back when encountering our "Red Seas" (p. 60)?
 - d. Why do you think God allowed the Israelites to encounter undrinkable water (p. 62)?
 - e. Have you ever felt frustrated or angry with God because of a disappointment (p. 64)?
 - f. What kinds of lessons has God taught you and through what kinds of tests (p. 67)?
 - g. How do you know when an inner hunger is for only God to fill, and what is the purpose of spiritual hunger (p. 68)?
 - h. Why do you think God orchestrates in-between times in your spiritual life (p. 70)?
 - i. When was a time your appreciation for God's ability deepened? How did it impact your pursuit of the Lord (p. 75)?
3. Show session 4 video [49:50]. If time permits, discuss. Possible questions:
 - a. When has God been saying to you, "steady as you go"?
 - b. What does it mean for you to yield to the wilderness?
 - c. What is the difference between a relationship and an enterprise?
 - d. How do you sense God alluring you into a deeper relationship?
 - e. How can you adjust to the reality that God is wild about you?
4. Encourage group members to do their study this week. Close with prayer.

Session Five

BREAKING BARRIERS

1. Greet members. Open with prayer.
2. Lead discussion. Possible questions include:
 - a. What priorities do you think have taken precedence over intimacy with God in Christianity today (p. 84)?
 - b. When have you seen God during a trying season of life (p. 85)?
 - c. What have you learned as a result of a difficult time in your life (p. 87)?
 - d. How does Isaiah 59:2 shed light on how sin impacts God's plans for His children (p. 90)?

- e. How would our lives be different if our covenant with God was conditional, and how does this affect your desire to pursue holiness (p. 91)?
 - f. How did you respond to the idea that God speaks (p. 94)?
 - g. How does the idea of hearing God for yourself impact you (p. 95)?
 - h. What is one step you could take to overcome complacency in hearing God (p. 96)?
 - i. When you encounter God's power, do you tend to run to Him or run away from Him (p. 100)?
 - j. Did you grow up in an environment that contributed to a healthy or unhealthy fear of God (p. 101)?
3. Show session 5 video [40:35]. If time permits, discuss. Possible questions:
- a. What are the visible evidences that someone is experiencing the power of God in her life?
 - b. What do you think and feel when you hear the word destiny?
 - c. What is the difference between the wilderness and wandering in the wilderness?
 - d. How can the promised land look too risky?
 - e. What does the fact that the Israelites saw but still refused to obey say to you?
 - f. What is your "valley of Eschol cluster keeper"?
4. Encourage group members to do their study this week. Close with prayer.

Session Six

ASPIRING TO ABUNDANCE

1. Greet members. Open with prayer.
2. Lead discussion. Possible questions include:
 - a. From what has God delivered or been delivering you? In what ways has the wilderness developed you (p. 105)?
 - b. How does the term destiny correspond to Canaan (p. 106)?
 - c. What changes may you need to make to embrace God's journey for you (p. 109)?
 - d. What tasks take your attention from relationship with God (p. 113)?
 - e. Why do you think the Lord withheld entry to Canaan from Moses rather than a lesser punishment (p. 116)?
 - f. In what way does your life mirror the character you chose (p. 119)?
 - g. What has God asked you to relinquish? What are the dangers of not letting go of the things God asks us to give up (p. 122)?
 - h. What things did you discover with the chart on page 125?

3. Show session 6 video [40:34]. If time permits, discuss. Possible questions:
 - a. What kind of things have had to die for you to move on in your relationship with God?
 - b. How important do you consider acting immediately in obedience?
 - c. To what has God called you that you feel incapable and unequipped?
 - d. How can you follow Jesus' example in John 5:19?
 - e. In what ways do you give yourself to the good stuff instead of the God stuff?
 - f. What difference might anticipating God's miracles make in your life? What do you need to do to sanctify yourself?
 - g. What do you need to do to get your feet wet?

Session Seven

CONCLUSION

1. Greet members. Open with prayer.
2. Lead discussion. Possible questions include:
 - a. What facets of promised-land living most stand out to you (p. 129)?
 - b. What similarities do you see among the people who are enjoying God's inheritance (p. 130)?
 - c. What do excuses regarding why you can't do what God asks reveal about how you view yourself (p.131)?
 - d. What tasks to which you are currently called don't always feel as worthwhile as you could wish (p. 133)?
 - e. How do you Joshua and Caleb's faith influenced their perception of the land (p. 139)?
 - f. What are three things God has called you to believe Him for, and what makes it difficult to trust Him in those areas (p. 139)?
 - g. How might believers balance waiting on God and moving forward in faith (p. 143)?
 - h. What are some practical ways you can encourage someone else to "cross the Jordan River" and enter into promised-land living (p. 150)?
3. Show session 7 short video [7:33].
4. If you have time, either with this session or later, have a celebration of completing the study. You may use the bonus material as part of your celebration. Lead the group to plan ways they can continue to support one another in their journey.