EXPERIENCING GOD

A Nine-Week New Testament Companion Series

January 10–March 7, 2027 | Sunday LIFEGroup Teacher Edition

Purpose and How to Use This Guide

This leader guide follows the familiar Frisco First lesson structure: MAIN POINT, INTRODUCTION, UNDERSTANDING, APPLICATION, PRAYER, and COMMENTARY. The New Testament text remains the primary teaching anchor; Moses serves as an illustration of the biblical principle.

Suggested 60-minute rhythm: Introduction 8 min; Understanding with Scripture and discussion 32 min; Application 12 min; Prayer 8 min. Commentary is for leader preparation, not material that must all be read aloud.

Series at a Glance

Week / Date	Title	Primary NT Scripture
1 • January 10 — Deacon Ordination Sunday	God Is Already at Work	John 5:17–20
2 • January 17- DNOW Weekend	When God Gets Your Attention	John 17:3
3 • January 24 — Parent/Child Sunday	The Invitation	2 Corinthians 5:18–20
4 • January 31- LIFEGroup Training	How God Speaks	Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:16–17
5 • February 7 — Missions Sunday	Crisis of Belief: "Who Am I?"	2 Corinthians 12:9–10
6 • February 14 — Tailgates and Tables	You Can't Stay Where You Are	Luke 14:28–33
7 • February 21 — Deacons & Baptism Sunday	Standing Still at the Dead End	2 Corinthians 1:8–10
8 • February 28	Daily Bread	Matthew 6:11,31–34; John 15:4–5
9 • March 7	Show Me Your Glory	John 14:8–9; 2 Corinthians 3:18

NOTE: For this nine-week series, Pastor Chuck will walk us through the life of Moses while our LIFEGroup lessons explore New Testament passages that reinforce the same spiritual truths. The major themes for the series are drawn from Experiencing God and its emphasis on recognizing where God is at work and responding to Him in faith and obedience.

To get the most from these next nine weeks, we encourage everyone to consider purchasing the 12-week Experiencing God journal. We will also offer a Wednesday night group for those who want to dig deeper into the material. Please note that we will not be using the Experiencing God video curriculum in any of our group settings.

Because Experiencing God is deeply personal and invites people to consider how God is working in their current circumstances, these lessons may require a little more preparation than usual. Rather than simply covering material, our goal is to help people recognize God's activity, hear His invitation, and respond faithfully. Thank you in advance for the additional time, prayer, and preparation you will invest. Your leadership can help make these nine weeks meaningful and Kingdom-impacting for the people in your group.

WEEK 1 — God Is Already at Work

January 10 — Deacon Ordination Sunday • John 5:17–20

MAIN POINT

God's work begins with God, not me.

Aim: Help people recognize God's initiative and look for where they can join Him rather than simply ask Him to bless their own plans.

Primary NT: John 5:17–20

Supporting NT: Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:13; Romans 8:28

Key Doctrine: Providence and divine initiative

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

When you ask, "What is God's will for my life?" what are you really hoping God will do for you? Jesus starts not with my plans but with the Father's ongoing work.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 5:17–20.

- What does Jesus say the Father is doing?
- What can the Son do by Himself?
- What determines Jesus' activity?
- What does the Father show the Son?

Movement 1 — God is already working

Connect: John 5:17; Romans 8:28

God is not absent simply because we cannot see His activity. Israel's rescue began with God, not Moses.

Apply: Where do you see signs of God's work in people and relationships?

Leader explanation: John 5:17–20 unfolds in the context of a Sabbath controversy following Jesus' healing of a disabled man. Jesus' statement about His Father working is not a generic encouragement to stay busy; it is a claim about the Father's ongoing work and the Son's unique relationship to Him.

Moses illustration: Exodus 2–3: God responded to Israel's suffering before Moses understood what was happening.

Movement 2 — Dependence precedes participation

Connect: John 5:19–20; Philippians 2:13

Jesus models perfect dependence on the Father.

Apply: Where have you been running ahead of God?

Leader explanation: Jesus' statement that the Son does nothing "of his own accord" expresses perfect unity with the Father, not lack of divine power. The Son sees and does what the Father does. Believers imitate His humble obedience analogically; we do not have His unique divine knowledge.

Movement 3 — God finishes what He begins

Connect: Philippians 1:6

God carries His purposes forward, freeing us from thinking everything depends on us. Deacons serve where God is working among His people.

Apply: What faithful act of service is already in front of you?

Leader explanation: Philippians 2:13 underscores that God is at work in His people to shape both desire and action. Philippians 1:6 assures believers of God's persevering grace. Romans 8:28 speaks of God's purpose for those who love Him, not a promise that every circumstance will feel good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- According to John 5, whose work comes first?
- Why is dependence central to Jesus' ministry?
- How is joining God different from asking Him to bless a personal plan?
- Where are you tempted to believe God is doing nothing?
- Does God's initiative create relief or uncertainty?
- What relationship may be showing signs of spiritual curiosity?
- Who has God repeatedly placed in your path?
- How could you respond this week?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- What truth about God do you most need to carry into this week?
- Where do you see God working?
- How can you demonstrate greater dependence on Him this week?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Father, You are already working. Forgive my self-reliance. Give me eyes to see Your activity and courage to respond.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ John 5:17–20; Philippians 1:3–6; Philippians 2:12–13; Romans 8:26–30; Ephesians 2:8–10

DO / PRAY Write three places where God may be working; pray, "Father, show me where You are already at work."

MEMORY VERSE John 5:19

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: John 5:17–20

John 5:17–20 unfolds in the context of a Sabbath controversy following Jesus' healing of a disabled man. Jesus' statement about His Father working is not a generic encouragement to stay busy; it is a claim about the Father's ongoing work and the Son's unique relationship to Him.

Jesus' statement that the Son does nothing "of his own accord" expresses perfect unity with the Father, not lack of divine power. The Son sees and does what the Father does. Believers imitate His humble obedience analogically; we do not have His unique divine knowledge.

Philippians 2:13 underscores that God is at work in His people to shape both desire and action. Philippians 1:6 assures believers of God's persevering grace. Romans 8:28 speaks of God's purpose for those who love Him, not a promise that every circumstance will feel good.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 2 — When God Gets Your Attention

January 17 • John 17:3

MAIN POINT

Before God invites me into His work, He invites me to know Him.

Aim: Show that God's ultimate invitation is relationship through Christ, not merely an assignment.

Primary NT: John 17:3

Supporting NT: John 6:44; 1 John 4:9–10, 19; Revelation 3:20

Key Doctrine: Grace and relationship with God through Christ

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

Have you ever been so focused on getting somewhere that you missed the journey? What tends to capture your attention? How has always being connected (phone, text, social media, etc.) changed your attention span?

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 17:3.

- How does Jesus define eternal life?
- What is striking about that definition?
- Who makes knowing God possible?
- How is relationship different from assignment?

Movement 1 — God initiates the relationship

Connect: John 6:44; 1 John 4:19

We love because God first loved us. Moses did not arrange the burning bush.

Apply: What might you need to turn aside from?

Leader explanation: In John 17, Jesus prays on the eve of His crucifixion. He defines eternal life in relational terms: knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. This knowing is covenantal and personal, not merely knowing correct facts.

Moses illustration: Moses turns aside at the burning bush; God initiates the encounter (Ex 3:1-6).

Movement 2 — God's invitation is personal

Connect: John 17:3; Revelation 3:20

Jesus wants fellowship, not merely workers. Read Revelation 3:20 within its message to the church.

Apply: Do you find it easier to work for Jesus than to be with Jesus?

Leader explanation: John 6:44 describes the Father's gracious initiative in drawing people to Christ. First John 4:9–10 locates love in God's action of sending His Son, and verse 19 explains that our love responds to His love. Spiritual life begins in grace, not achievement.

Movement 3 — Relationship gives meaning to mission

Connect: 1 John 4:9–10

Communion with Christ undergirds service, protecting us from performance and comparison.

Apply: How can you practice being with Christ this week?

Leader explanation: Revelation 3:20 is addressed to the church in Laodicea, calling a complacent congregation to repent and renew fellowship with Christ. It should not be reduced to a technique for hearing private messages. The point of attention is communion with the Lord.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is eternal life according to Jesus?
- How does God take the initiative?
- Why is relationship prior to mission?
- Which is harder: being with God or doing things for God?
- What most interrupts your attention—hurry, shame, or distraction?
- Where has usefulness replaced intimacy?
- What daily activity could become a "turn aside" moment?
- What distraction needs a boundary?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- Based upon your relational time with God, what might He be calling you to do?
- What is one thing you can do this week to remind you of your calling?
- Who might benefit from what you learned, and how could you share it?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Jesus, I do not simply want directions or assignments. I want to know You. Turn my attention toward You.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ John 17:1–5; John 6:35–44; 1 John 4:7–19; Luke 10:38–42; Philippians 3:7–10

DO / PRAY Choose a ten-minute daily "turn aside" time for Scripture and prayer.

MEMORY VERSE John 17:3

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: John 17:3

In John 17, Jesus prays on the eve of His crucifixion. He defines eternal life in relational terms: knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. This knowing is covenantal and personal, not merely knowing correct facts.

John 6:44 describes the Father's gracious initiative in drawing people to Christ. First John 4:9–10 locates love in God's action of sending His Son, and verse 19 explains that our love responds to His love. Spiritual life begins in grace, not achievement.

Revelation 3:20 is addressed to the church in Laodicea, calling a complacent congregation to repent and renew fellowship with Christ. It should not be reduced to a technique for hearing private messages. The point of attention is communion with the Lord.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 3 — The Invitation

January 24 — Parent/Child Sunday • 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

MAIN POINT

God doesn't simply show me what He is doing; He invites me to join Him.

Aim: Help people recognize God's invitation to participate in His reconciling mission.

Primary NT: 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

Supporting NT: John 15:15–16; Ephesians 2:10

Key Doctrine: Reconciliation and mission

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

Who first trusted you with a responsibility that made you think, "I'm not ready"? Being invited often says something about the relationship.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18–20.

- Who initiates reconciliation?
- Who receives it?
- What work has been entrusted to believers?
- What does "ambassador" imply?

Movement 1 — Reconciled before commissioned

Connect: 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

We belong to Christ before we represent Him; mission does not earn acceptance.

Apply: How does grace change your willingness to serve?

Leader explanation: Second Corinthians 5:17–21 is rooted in Christ's reconciling death. God reconciles people to Himself through Christ and entrusts the message of reconciliation to His followers. Ambassadors announce the King's message rather than inventing a message of their own.

Moses illustration: Moses hears God's sending commission; God's rescue comes first (Ex 3:7-10).

Movement 2 — God prepares good work

Connect: Ephesians 2:10

Good works are prepared beforehand. In families, a kingdom assignment may be close to the dinner table.

Apply: What prepared work might be in your home?

Leader explanation: Ephesians 2:8–10 safeguards the order: salvation is by grace through faith, not by works; good works follow as the result of God's craftsmanship. Prepared works are not an excuse to search for hidden clues but an invitation to ordinary faithfulness.

Movement 3 — Jesus calls friends who bear fruit

Connect: John 15:15–16

Friendship with Christ and fruitful mission are joined.

Apply: What person or need keeps returning to your attention?

Leader explanation: John 15:15–16 joins friendship with Jesus to being appointed to bear enduring fruit. Christ's choice takes priority over human accomplishment. On Parent/Child Sunday, care in family relationships is one setting for this faithfulness, but the passage is not limited to parents.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does ambassador mean?
- Why does reconciliation come first?
- When were good works prepared?
- Does God's invitation excite or intimidate you?
- Where do you feel unqualified?
- What recurring burden catches your attention?
- What opportunity exists within your family?
- What step could you take this week?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- Who needs your attention this week?
- What relationship is God asking you to reconcile?
- Is there one step you can take to help someone else reconcile this week?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Lord, thank You for reconciling me. Help me see the people and work You have prepared; give me courage to respond.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ 2 Corinthians 5:14–21; Ephesians 2:1–10; John 15:9–17; Matthew 5:13–16; Colossians 4:2–6

DO / PRAY Make a burden inventory: one person, one need, one place. Act on one opportunity.

MEMORY VERSE Ephesians 2:10

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

Second Corinthians 5:17–21 is rooted in Christ's reconciling death. God reconciles people to Himself through Christ and entrusts the message of reconciliation to His followers. Ambassadors announce the King's message rather than inventing a message of their own.

Ephesians 2:8–10 safeguards the order: salvation is by grace through faith, not by works; good works follow as the result of God's craftsmanship. Prepared works are not an excuse to search for hidden clues but an invitation to ordinary faithfulness.

John 15:15–16 joins friendship with Jesus to being appointed to bear enduring fruit. Christ's choice takes priority over human accomplishment. On Parent/Child Sunday, care in family relationships is one setting for this faithfulness, but the passage is not limited to parents.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 4 — How God Speaks

January 31 • Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

MAIN POINT

God has spoken decisively in Jesus and reliably through Scripture, and His Spirit guides His people in truth.

Aim: Provide a biblical framework for discerning guidance without sign-chasing or untested personal impressions.

Primary NT: Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Supporting NT: John 10:27; John 16:13–15; Romans 8:26–27; Acts 13:1–3

Key Doctrine: Revelation, Scripture, illumination, discernment

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

Christians often say "God told me," sometimes claiming contradictory things. How should we determine if God really spoke? When was the last time you were really convinced God spoke to you? What was the result?

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 1:1–2; 2 TIMOTHY 3:16–17.

- How did God speak in earlier times?
- How do we verify that God is actually speaking to us in a specific circumstance?
- What makes Scripture unique?
- What does Scripture equip believers to do?

Movement 1 — Jesus is God's definitive revelation

Connect: Hebrews 1:1–2

God's character and purposes are decisively revealed in Christ.

Apply: Does this direction agree with Jesus' teaching?

Leader explanation: Hebrews 1:1–2 contrasts God's former speech through the prophets with His climactic revelation in His Son. The passage centers Christ as the fulfillment of God's self-disclosure, not a promise of recurring private revelation in the same manner.

Moses illustration: God speaks directly to Moses; his unique experience is not a required pattern for all Christians (Ex 3:13-22, 4:27-31).

Movement 2 — Scripture is final authority

Connect: 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Scripture teaches, corrects, and equips. Scripture judges our thoughts, not the reverse.

Apply: What does Scripture clearly say?

Leader explanation: Second Timothy 3:16–17 identifies Scripture as God-breathed and useful for teaching, correction, training, and equipping. The Bible is sufficient for faithful discipleship; wise decisions about matters Scripture does not specify call for prayerful judgment and Christian counsel.

Movement 3 — The Spirit guides the church

Connect: John 16:13–15; Acts 13:1–3

Prayer, wisdom, circumstances, and mature counsel can aid discernment under Scripture.

Apply: Seek mature counsel for an important unresolved decision.

Leader explanation: John 16:13–15 originally addresses Jesus' disciples before His departure, emphasizing that the Spirit glorifies Christ and guides into truth. Acts 13:1–3 places discernment in a worshiping church. Avoid presenting circumstances or inner impressions as authorities equal to Scripture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What distinguishes God's revelation to all and His will/purpose for you?
- Why should Scripture supersede all other forms of God's communication to us?
- What role does the church play in discovering God's personal will?
- Why do signs sometimes feel easier than wisdom?
- Are you afraid of missing God's will?
- When have desires masqueraded as guidance?
- Which decision are you discerning?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- Whose mature counsel can you seek?
- If God speaks through the Holy Spirit using the Bible, prayer, events, and others, where do you need to spend more time this week?
- How are you balancing these avenues in your life?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Father, thank You for Jesus and Your Word. Spirit, reveal truth, correct my desires, and give me courage to obey.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ John 10:22–30; Hebrews 1:1–4; 2 Timothy 3:14–17; John 16:12–15; Acts 13:1–4

DO / PRAY Use SOAP daily: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer. For decisions test Scripture first, then prayer, wisdom, and church confirmation.

MEMORY VERSE 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Leader caution: Scripture judges personal impressions. Evaluate guidance through biblical teaching, prayer, wise circumstances, and mature church counsel; do not imply that every internal thought is God's voice.

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Hebrews 1:1–2 contrasts God's former speech through the prophets with His climactic revelation in His Son. The passage centers Christ as the fulfillment of God's self-disclosure, not a promise of recurring private revelation in the same manner.

Second Timothy 3:16–17 identifies Scripture as God-breathed and useful for teaching, correction, training, and equipping. The Bible is sufficient for faithful discipleship; wise decisions about matters Scripture does not specify call for prayerful judgment and Christian counsel.

John 16:13–15 originally addresses Jesus' disciples before His departure, emphasizing that the Spirit glorifies Christ and guides into truth. Acts 13:1–3 places discernment in a worshiping church. Avoid presenting circumstances or inner impressions as authorities equal to Scripture.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 5 — Crisis of Belief: "Who Am I?"

February 7 — Missions Sunday • 2 Corinthians 12:9–10

MAIN POINT

The crisis is rarely whether I am enough. The crisis is whether I believe God is enough.

Aim: Shift confidence from personal competence to the sufficiency of Christ.

Primary NT: 2 Corinthians 12:9–10

Supporting NT: 2 Corinthians 3:5; Hebrews 11:6; James 2:17; Matthew 14:28–31

Key Doctrine: Grace, weakness, faith

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

What assignment makes you think, "God, You have the wrong person"? Missions quickly exposes fears about language, money, ability, and control.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9–10.

- What did Paul ask God to remove?
- What answer did God give?
- Where is Christ's power displayed?
- How did Paul's evaluation of weakness change?

Movement 1 — God does not require self-sufficiency

Connect: 2 Corinthians 3:5

Our sufficiency comes from God. The better question is not "Who am I?" but "Who is God?"

Apply: Name where you feel inadequate.

Leader explanation: Paul's "thorn" in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 remains unidentified; the passage therefore resists easy claims that every weakness has the same explanation. His threefold plea was met not with removal but with the Lord's promise of sufficient grace.

Moses illustration: Moses' repeated "Who am I?" objections (Ex 3:11, 4:1-17).

Movement 2 — Faith transfers confidence

Connect: Hebrews 11:6

Faith trusts God's character, not our predicted outcome. Mission often challenges comfort.

Apply: What control or comfort do you fear losing?

Leader explanation: Christ's power is made perfect in weakness: this does not glorify suffering itself or discourage seeking appropriate help. It redirects confidence from personal capacity to God's sustaining grace. Second Corinthians 3:5 makes the same point regarding ministry competence.

Movement 3 — Real faith takes action

Connect: James 2:17; Matthew 14:28–31

Trust becomes obedience even while we remain dependent.

Apply: Rewrite an excuse as the belief about God beneath it.

Leader explanation: Hebrews 11:6 teaches that faith approaches God trusting His reality and character. James 2:17 reminds us that living faith acts. On Missions Sunday, do not equate courage with recklessness; faithful mission includes preparation, partnership, accountability, and love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is Paul's view of weakness?
- How is faith different from positive thinking?
- Why might weakness remain?
- Where do you feel inadequate?
- What might God ask that you fear?
- What does mission reveal about your comfort?
- What belief underlies your recurring excuse?
- What faithful action can you take?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- How can you embrace desperate dependence in the midst of doubt this week?
- What is one clear act of obedience this lesson calls for?
- What objection do you need to lay aside?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Jesus, I often judge Your invitation by my abilities. Teach me to trust Your sufficiency and act faithfully.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; 2 Corinthians 3:4–6; Matthew 14:22–33; Hebrews 11:1–6; James 2:14–18

DO / PRAY Pray daily for one missionary or mission partner; initiate one spiritual conversation.

MEMORY VERSE 2 Corinthians 12:9

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: 2 Corinthians 12:9–10

Paul's "thorn" in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 remains unidentified; the passage therefore resists easy claims that every weakness has the same explanation. His threefold plea was met not with removal but with the Lord's promise of sufficient grace.

Christ's power is made perfect in weakness: this does not glorify suffering itself or discourage seeking appropriate help. It redirects confidence from personal capacity to God's sustaining grace. Second Corinthians 3:5 makes the same point regarding ministry competence.

Hebrews 11:6 teaches that faith approaches God trusting His reality and character. James 2:17 reminds us that living faith acts. On Missions Sunday, do not equate courage with recklessness; faithful mission includes preparation, partnership, accountability, and love.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 6 — You Can't Stay Where You Are

February 14 — Super Bowl Sunday • Luke 14:28–33

MAIN POINT

I cannot follow Jesus and insist on staying exactly where I am.

Aim: Teach that following Jesus changes loyalties, habits, priorities, and use of resources.

Primary NT: Luke 14:28–33

Supporting NT: Luke 9:23–26; Mark 10:17–22; Philippians 2:5–8; Galatians 6:9

Key Doctrine: Discipleship and surrender

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

What do you value enough to rearrange your schedule around? Sports fans adjust calendars, resources, and plans because something matters deeply.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 14:28–33.

- What repeated words appear in Luke 14?
- Why does Jesus talk about counting the cost?
- What does Jesus refuse to hide?
- What does verse 33 require?

Movement 1 — Jesus refuses to hide the cost

Connect: Luke 14:28–33

Grace is free; discipleship is costly. Sacrifice does not purchase salvation.

Apply: What does following Him mean for your priorities?

Leader explanation: Luke 14:25–33 contains stark sayings about discipleship and two short examples about calculating costs. Jesus is not teaching hatred of family as a virtue; His hyperbolic comparison demands that allegiance to Him surpass every competing loyalty.

Moses illustration: Moses cannot remain in Midian while joining the Exodus mission (Ex 4:18-31, 5:1-6:9).

Movement 2 — Invitation requires adjustment

Connect: Luke 9:23–26

Cross-bearing is daily; Jesus' lordship challenges schedules, spending, relationships, reputation, comfort, habits, and control.

Apply: Which specific area needs to change?

Leader explanation: Luke 9:23 calls for daily self-denial and cross-bearing. The language of the cross should not be trivialized into ordinary inconveniences. Jesus invites followers to costly identification with Him, while His grace remains the basis of salvation.

Movement 3 — We may want Jesus without surrender

Connect: Mark 10:17–22; Philippians 2:5–8

The rich ruler wanted life but resisted relinquishing what ruled him. Christ's humility models surrender.

Apply: What one step can be taken within 24 hours?

Leader explanation: Mark 10:17–22 demonstrates how possessions can reveal rival loyalties. Jesus' instruction addresses this man's particular bondage and challenges all readers to examine their own competing treasures. Philippians 2:5–8 presents Jesus' humility as the pattern for His people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why must disciples count the cost?
- How is discipleship different from earning salvation?
- Why is cross-bearing daily?
- What is hardest to surrender?
- What cost do you fear?
- Where do you wish Jesus would lower His expectations?
- What adjustment have you postponed?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- What can you surrender this week?
- Do you think you know where god is calling you?
- Do you know what it will cost in terms of sacrifice?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Jesus, You are Lord. I surrender my schedule, comfort, resources, relationships, and control. Give courage to change.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ Luke 14:25–33; Luke 9:18–26; Mark 10:17–31; Philippians 2:5–11; Galatians 6:7–10

DO / PRAY Make one measurable adjustment; optionally fast from a comfort and replace it with prayer or generosity.

MEMORY VERSE Luke 9:23

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: Luke 14:28–33

Luke 14:25–33 contains stark sayings about discipleship and two short examples about calculating costs. Jesus is not teaching hatred of family as a virtue; His hyperbolic comparison demands that allegiance to Him surpass every competing loyalty.

Luke 9:23 calls for daily self-denial and cross-bearing. The language of the cross should not be trivialized into ordinary inconveniences. Jesus invites followers to costly identification with Him, while His grace remains the basis of salvation.

Mark 10:17–22 demonstrates how possessions can reveal rival loyalties. Jesus' instruction addresses this man's particular bondage and challenges all readers to examine their own competing treasures. Philippians 2:5–8 presents Jesus' humility as the pattern for His people.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 7 — Standing Still at the Dead End

February 21 — Deacons & Baptism Sunday • 2 Corinthians 1:8–10

MAIN POINT

God can use situations beyond our ability to teach us reliance on Him and display His glory.

Aim: Build hope in God through seeming dead ends and identify one faithful next step.

Primary NT: 2 Corinthians 1:8–10

Supporting NT: John 14:21, 23; John 7:17; Ephesians 3:20–21; James 1:22–25

Key Doctrine: Providence, dependence, knowledge of God through obedience

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

Have you ever obeyed God and things got worse? Sometimes obedience does not remove the wall. Paul describes pressure beyond his own strength.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8–10.

- What words describe Paul's distress?
- What did he conclude at the time?
- What purpose does he identify?
- What pattern of hope does he express?

Movement 1 — Beyond our strength

Connect: 2 Corinthians 1:8–10; Ephesians 3:20–21

Paul does not minimize hardship. The burden taught reliance on the God of resurrection. Israel's apparent trap was not evidence of God's absence.

Apply: Where do you try to force a solution?

Leader explanation: Second Corinthians 1:8–11 describes a severe affliction in Asia, beyond Paul's strength, leaving him despairing of life. Paul interprets the ordeal as training in reliance on the God who raises the dead. His hope reaches beyond the immediate outcome.

Moses illustration: Exodus 14–15: the sea, Pharaoh's army, and Israel's song of deliverance.

Movement 2 — Stillness is trust, not passivity

Connect: James 1:22–25; John 7:17

Exodus 14 combines stand firm with move forward. Trust is an inner posture; obedience still takes action.

Apply: What next step is faithful without controlling the outcome?

Leader explanation: John 14:21,23 emphasizes that love for Christ expresses itself in keeping His word and is met with deeper fellowship. This is not a formula guaranteeing rescue from each crisis. James 1:22–25 equally urges embodied obedience to what God has already revealed.

Movement 3 — Obedience deepens fellowship

Connect: John 14:21,23

Jesus links love, obedience, and fellowship. Israel's post-deliverance song became testimony rather than theory.

Apply: Who can pray and discern with you?

Leader explanation: Exodus 14 provides a memorable picture of impossible circumstances and God's deliverance. Yet not every believer's "Red Sea" parts in the expected way. Do not attribute every tragedy directly to God or promise a specific earthly resolution; point to resurrection as the final Christian hope.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did suffering teach Paul?
- Why does resurrection matter here?
- What does it mean to rely on God?
- How do you respond to a dead end?
- Where do you interpret hardship as abandonment?
- What do you fear if you stop forcing a solution?
- What is one next faithful step?
- Who can help you discern?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- What would setting hope on God look like tomorrow?
- How can you prepare now for your next crisis?
- When your next crisis hits, who will you call? Commit now that your first phone call is to that person.

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Father, You raise the dead. I confess self-reliance and release my demand for full understanding. Show me the next faithful step.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ 2 Corinthians 1:8–11; James 1:22–25; John 14:21–24; Ephesians 3:14–21; Psalm 46

DO / PRAY Share one dead end with a trusted believer, pray together, and take one wise next step. Baptism pictures identification with Christ's death and resurrection.

MEMORY VERSE 2 Corinthians 1:9–10

Leader caution: Do not imply every hardship is direct punishment or that sufferers should merely tolerate harmful situations. God remains sovereign and good in a fallen world; prayer, support, and wise action matter.

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: 2 Corinthians 1:8–10

Second Corinthians 1:8–11 describes a severe affliction in Asia, beyond Paul's strength, leaving him despairing of life. Paul interprets the ordeal as training in reliance on the God who raises the dead. His hope reaches beyond the immediate outcome.

John 14:21,23 emphasizes that love for Christ expresses itself in keeping His word and is met with deeper fellowship. This is not a formula guaranteeing rescue from each crisis. James 1:22–25 equally urges embodied obedience to what God has already revealed.

Exodus 14 provides a memorable picture of impossible circumstances and God's deliverance. Yet not every believer's "Red Sea" parts in the expected way. Do not attribute every tragedy directly to God or promise a specific earthly resolution; point to resurrection as the final Christian hope.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 8 — Daily Bread

February 28 • Matthew 6:11,31–34; John 15:4–5

MAIN POINT

God does not merely teach me to trust Him in crises; He teaches me to depend upon Him every day.

Aim: Move from crisis-only spirituality to ordinary, consistent abiding in Christ.

Primary NT: Matthew 6:11, 31–34; John 15:4–5

Supporting NT: John 6:31–35; Philippians 4:19

Key Doctrine: Abiding, dependence, spiritual formation

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

Would you rather have all you need for the next decade today or learn to trust God each day? We usually want a warehouse; God often supplies manna.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 6:11, 31–34; JOHN 15:4–5.

- What does “daily bread” tell us about time?
- What does Jesus say about tomorrow?
- What happens apart from Christ?
- What does abiding produce?

Movement 1 — Jesus teaches daily dependence

Connect: Matthew 6:11,31–34

Jesus teaches daily provision rather than a guarantee of total certainty. Israel could not hoard manna.

Apply: What are you worrying about tomorrow?

Leader explanation: The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:11 trains disciples to request daily provision, not to secure advance control over tomorrow. Jesus then addresses anxiety in Matthew 6:25–34 by pointing to the Father’s knowledge and care.

Moses illustration: God provides manna daily in the wilderness (Ex 15:22-27, 16:1-31).

Movement 2 — Jesus Himself is Bread

Connect: John 6:35

We come to Christ not merely because He supplies needs but because He is our life.

Apply: Where are you searching for security outside Him?

Leader explanation: In John 6:31–35, Jesus compares the wilderness manna with the true bread from heaven. His claim to be the Bread of Life directs hearers to come to Him and believe in Him; devotional habits are means of fellowship, not substitutes for Christ.

Movement 3 — Abiding produces fruit

Connect: John 15:4–5

A branch bears fruit by remaining connected. Ministry flowing from communion differs from ministry replacing communion.

Apply: Build a sustainable daily "manna rhythm."

Leader explanation: John 15:4–5 depicts fruitfulness as dependence upon abiding in Jesus. The branch does not create life from itself. This teaching encourages consistent prayer, Scripture meditation, worship, and obedience while avoiding shame when practices are disrupted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why ask for bread daily?
- What is abiding?
- What does apart from Me mean?
- What else do you feed on for security?
- Why prefer dramatic crises to daily faithfulness?
- Are you living on yesterday's faith?
- What rhythm strengthens communion?
- What modest habit is sustainable?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- What truth about God do you most need to carry into this week?
- What do you need to start deepening your dependence?
- What do you need to stop to break an unhealthy allegiance?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Jesus, You are the Bread of Life. Supply today's grace. Teach me to abide and entrust tomorrow to You.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ Matthew 6:9–13; Matthew 6:25–34; John 6:31–40; John 15:1–11; Philippians 4:10–20

DO / PRAY Use a "Manna Plan": same time, same place, small passage, short prayer, one act of obedience.

MEMORY VERSE John 15:5

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: Matthew 6:11,31–34; John 15:4–5

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:11 trains disciples to request daily provision, not to secure advance control over tomorrow. Jesus then addresses anxiety in Matthew 6:25–34 by pointing to the Father's knowledge and care.

In John 6:31–35, Jesus compares the wilderness manna with the true bread from heaven. His claim to be the Bread of Life directs hearers to come to Him and believe in Him; devotional habits are means of fellowship, not substitutes for Christ.

John 15:4–5 depicts fruitfulness as dependence upon abiding in Jesus. The branch does not create life from itself. This teaching encourages consistent prayer, Scripture meditation, worship, and obedience while avoiding shame when practices are disrupted.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.

WEEK 9 — Show Me Your Glory

March 7 • John 14:8–9; 2 Corinthians 3:18

MAIN POINT

The deepest reward of walking with God is God Himself.

Aim: Conclude with the truth that knowing Christ is greater than outcomes, answered questions, and successful ministry.

Primary NT: John 14:8–9; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Supporting NT: John 1:14,18; Philippians 3:7–11; Hebrews 3:1–6; Matthew 17:1–3

Key Doctrine: Christ reveals God and transforms His people

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use these questions and illustrations to introduce the topic and surface lived experience.

If God gave you everything you requested but you did not know Him more deeply, would it be enough? God Himself is the destination.

Transition: Read the New Testament passage before turning to the Moses illustration.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and what it means. Read the assigned passage before offering interpretation.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 14:8–9; 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18.

- What does Philip request?
- How does Jesus answer?
- Where is God's glory revealed?
- What happens as believers behold the Lord?
- Who accomplishes transformation?

Movement 1 — God's glory has a face

Connect: John 14:8–9; John 1:14,18

God makes Himself known in Christ—His compassion, holiness, truth, sacrifice, and resurrection.

Apply: Look intentionally to Christ's character.

Leader explanation: In John 14:8–9, Philip requests to see the Father. Jesus responds that to see Him is to see the Father: He perfectly reveals God. John 1:14,18 likewise centers divine glory and revelation in the incarnate Son.

Moses illustration: Moses asks to see God's glory; Christ surpasses Moses and reveals the Father (Ex 32:1-6, 33:7-23).

Movement 2 — Beholding leads to becoming

Connect: 2 Corinthians 3:18

The Spirit transforms us as Christ captures our attention and affections; God works in us as well as through us.

Apply: What has your attention this season?

Leader explanation: Second Corinthians 3:18 describes believers beholding the Lord's glory and being transformed by the Spirit. Transformation is not merely the result of focused willpower or greater religious productivity; it is the gracious work of God.

Movement 3 — Knowing Christ becomes treasure

Connect: Philippians 3:7–11; Hebrews 3:1–6

Paul revalues all achievements around knowing Christ. Moses was faithful as servant, but Jesus is Son.

Apply: Name one way you know Him more deeply now.

Leader explanation: Philippians 3:7–11 portrays Paul counting former advantages as loss in view of knowing Christ. Hebrews 3:1–6 distinguishes Moses' faithfulness as a servant from Christ's superiority as Son. The entire Moses-based series appropriately culminates in Jesus rather than in Moses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does Jesus answer Philip?
- How does transformation happen?
- Why does Paul count former gains as loss?
- Do you seek God primarily for His gifts?
- What competes for your affection?
- How has your picture of God changed?
- What unfinished obedience remains?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the Scripture directly shapes their week. Invite a concrete response without pressuring anyone to disclose private circumstances.

- Which practice will you continue?
- Where do you see God working now?
- How have you changed since Week 1?

PRAYER

Guided prayer: Father, thank You for inviting us into relationships with Jesus and each other. We want more than Your gifts; we want You. Transform us as we behold Christ.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

READ Philippians 3:7–14 weekly for the next month; continue a daily Scripture rhythm.

DO / PRAY Invite brief testimonies: "One way I know God more now than nine weeks ago is…" Continue the Manna Plan.

MEMORY VERSE Philippians 3:10

COMMENTARY

Leader reference: John 14:8–9; 2 Corinthians 3:18

In John 14:8–9, Philip requests to see the Father. Jesus responds that to see Him is to see the Father: He perfectly reveals God. John 1:14,18 likewise centers divine glory and revelation in the incarnate Son.

Second Corinthians 3:18 describes believers beholding the Lord's glory and being transformed by the Spirit. Transformation is not merely the result of focused willpower or greater religious productivity; it is the gracious work of God.

Philippians 3:7–11 portrays Paul counting former advantages as loss in view of knowing Christ. Hebrews 3:1–6 distinguishes Moses' faithfulness as a servant from Christ's superiority as Son. The entire Moses-based series appropriately culminates in Jesus rather than in Moses.

Teaching note: Avoid making this passage promise more than it says. Invite honest questions, attend to the context, and return the discussion to Jesus and the authority of Scripture.