

Small Group Guide: Working for the Greatest

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for His Word and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application.

Icebreaker

Share about a job or project where you felt most fulfilled. What made that work meaningful to you?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Workers for the Greatest Read the Manual** - Believers need to consistently read and internalize Scripture to renew their minds and align their thinking with God's.
2. **Workers Wear the Uniform** - The armor of God (Ephesians 6) equips believers to stand firm against spiritual opposition and reminds us of our new identity in Christ.
3. **Workers Work Their Assignment** - God has unique work for each believer based on how He created them, whether "Mary" (contemplative) or "Martha" (active) work.
4. **Remember the Why** - All our work flows from remembering Christ's sacrifice and what He has done for us.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Reading the Manual (15-20 minutes)

1. **Romans 12:1-2** talks about being "transformed by the renewing of your mind."
 - How would you describe your current Bible reading habits?
 - What obstacles keep you from spending consistent time in God's Word?
2. The sermon mentioned that God wants us to walk "side by side" with Him, not at arm's length.
 - What does walking "side by side" with God look like practically in your daily life?
 - When are you most tempted to keep God "over in that box" you open on Sundays?

3. Cooper emphasized that it's about "persistence, not perfection" in our relationship with God.
 - o How does this perspective change the pressure you might feel about spiritual disciplines?
 - o What would "persistent" look like for you this week?

Part 2: Wearing the Uniform (15-20 minutes)

4. Review the armor of God from Ephesians 6:10-18:
 - o Belt of truth
 - o Breastplate of righteousness
 - o Shoes of the gospel of peace
 - o Shield of faith
 - o Helmet of salvation
 - o Sword of the Spirit (God's Word)

Which piece of armor do you most need to remember this week? Why?

5. The sermon said the armor helps us "stand firm" rather than "attack."
 - o How does this change your understanding of spiritual warfare?
 - o What does "standing firm" look like when you face temptation or spiritual attack?
6. Cooper mentioned that our new identity in Christ should be "worn with pride and not hidden."
 - o In what areas of your life do you find it hardest to let your faith show?
 - o What would it look like to wear your identity in Christ more openly?

Part 3: Working Your Assignment (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon distinguished between "Mary" work (contemplative, internal) and "Martha" work (active, external).
 - o Which type of work are you naturally drawn to?
 - o How can you appreciate and support those who work differently than you?
8. Review the list of internal work all believers can do:
 - o Receiving God's Word
 - o Obeying
 - o Honoring God in reactions
 - o Spending time in His presence

Which of these feels most challenging for you right now?

9. Review the external work options:
 - o Telling others about Jesus
 - o Discipling other believers
 - o Feeding and serving
 - o Being an excellent employee

Which of these is God calling you to engage in more fully?

10. Cooper asked several probing questions:

- Is God asking you to slow down?
- Is He asking you to trust Him?
- Is He asking you to endure and let Him carry you?
- Is He asking you to step forward into something new?
- Is He asking you to stop driving and let Him take the wheel?

Which question resonates most with where you are right now?

Personal Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Take a few minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- What is one specific way God is calling me to "work for the greatest" this week?
- What is one obstacle I need to overcome to do this work?
- Who can I ask to hold me accountable?

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to as a group or individually:

Individual Commitments:

- **Daily Bible Reading:** Commit to reading Scripture for 10-15 minutes each day this week. Consider starting with a book like Philippians or James.
- **Memorize Armor:** Choose one piece of the armor of God to meditate on each day this week.
- **Prayer Walk:** Take one walk this week where you intentionally talk with God and listen for His voice.
- **Identify Your Assignment:** Spend time in prayer asking God what specific work He has for you in this season.

Group Commitments:

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up to check in mid-week about your Bible reading and prayer time.
- **Serve Together:** Plan a group service project for next month (food pantry, church cleanup, visiting elderly members, etc.).

- **Scripture Memory:** As a group, memorize Ephesians 6:10-11 together and recite it next week.
- **Discipleship:** Consider starting a deeper Bible study together using a commentary or study guide.

Closing Exercise: Remembering

Just as communion helps us remember Christ's sacrifice, take time to:

1. **Go around the circle** and have each person complete this sentence: "*Because of what Jesus has done for me, I am now...*"
2. **Thank God together** for specific aspects of salvation mentioned by group members.

Prayer Time

- Pray for each person's specific "assignment" from God
- Pray for persistence in reading God's Word
- Pray for strength to stand firm in spiritual battles
- Thank God for His perfect sacrifice and the new identity we have in Christ

Before Next Week

- Follow through on your practical application commitment
- Be ready to share one way you saw God working in your life this week
- Consider journaling about your time in God's Word and what He's teaching you

Additional Resources

- **GotQuestions.org** - For deeper study on the armor of God
- **Bible reading plans** - Available through YouVersion Bible App or similar resources
- **Accountability apps** - Consider using tools to help track spiritual disciplines

"He's still working on me to make me what I need to be... How loving and patient He must be because He's still working on me."

Remember: This is about persistence, not perfection. Give yourself and each other grace as you grow together.

Cooper describes loving to work and being surrounded by excellence in work throughout his life. How has your family background or upbringing shaped your attitude toward work, both secular and spiritual?

Romans 12:2 calls believers to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. What specific practices or routines help you actively renew your mind rather than conform to the patterns of this world?

The sermon emphasizes that God wants us to read the Bible not just to find a list of things wrong with us, but to see what He has done. How does this shift in perspective change the way you approach Scripture?

Cooper uses the metaphor of walking side by side on a beach versus keeping someone at arm's length. Are you currently walking closely with God or keeping Him at a distance, and what would it take to walk more closely?

The armor of God in Ephesians 6 is described as defensive equipment for standing firm rather than offensive weapons for attacking. How does this understanding change your approach to spiritual warfare in daily life?

Cooper admits that some days he feels like he walks out the door with only one piece of the armor on. Which piece of the armor of God do you most frequently forget to put on, and why?

The sermon distinguishes between Mary-type and Martha-type workers, emphasizing that both are doing the Lord's work. Do you tend to judge others whose approach to serving God differs from yours, and how can you extend more grace?

Cooper lists internal jobs like receiving God's word, obeying, and honoring God in your reactions. Which of these internal works is most challenging for you, and what makes it difficult?

The sermon asks whether God is calling you to slow down and trust, to endure and stand firm, or to step forward into something new. What do you sense God is specifically asking of you in this season of your life?

Communion is described as the work of remembering the cost of knowing Jesus as Savior. How might approaching communion as active work rather than passive ritual deepen your worship experience?