

4 WEEKS

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

TO THE FLAG OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

IN GOD WE TRUST?

AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS

ONE NATION UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE

WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL



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# ONE NATION

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

What are you thankful for about your country?

### Big Idea:

We are not just Americans; we are ambassadors from heaven.

### Key Scriptures:

★ **2 Corinthians 5:19-20**

*"...And [God] has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."*

★ **John 15:16**

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last..."*

★ **1 Peter 2:9**

*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*

★ **1 Peter 2:12**

*"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."*





# UNDER GOD

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being more influenced under the culture, and 10 being more influenced under God, where do you rate yourself? Our country? What thoughts led to your answers?

### Big Idea:

You can't passively be a disciple of Jesus. If you're going to live daily under God, you have to make some intentional decisions to follow Him ahead of time.

### Key Scriptures:

★ Daniel 1:1-21

*"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the*

*Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you." Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus."*



### **1 Peter 5:6**

*"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."*

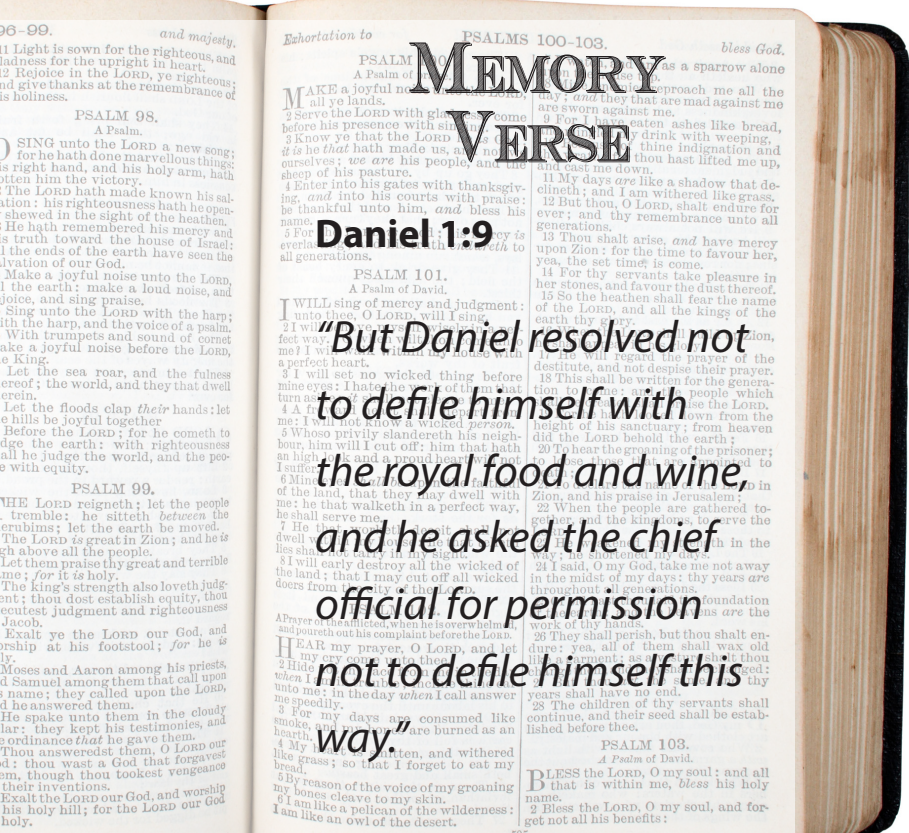
## Discussion:

1. Read Daniel 1:1-21. Share in your group what stands out to you in Daniel's story.
2. List these in order of how much they influence you: entertainment, work, money, faith, and approval of others. What do you think about your list?
3. What compromises are you tempted to make that causes you to gently drift away from living under God?

4. Read 1 Peter 5:6. What role does humility have in living your life under God's sovereignty?
5. What are three specific things will you resolve in order to live daily under God? What small steps will you have to take to follow through? Which is your first step?

## Wrapping It Up:

Ask someone to keep you accountable to taking your steps.







## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

If you said the Pledge of Allegiance as a kid, what did you think “indivisible” meant?

### Big Idea:

As Christians, we need each other, Christ wanted His followers to be united as one.

### Key Scriptures:

- ★ **John 17:20-21, 23** *“...I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one... so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*
- ★ **Romans 12:4-5** *“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.”*
- ★ **John 13:34-35** *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*
- ★ **Acts 4:32-34** *“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ...And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.”*

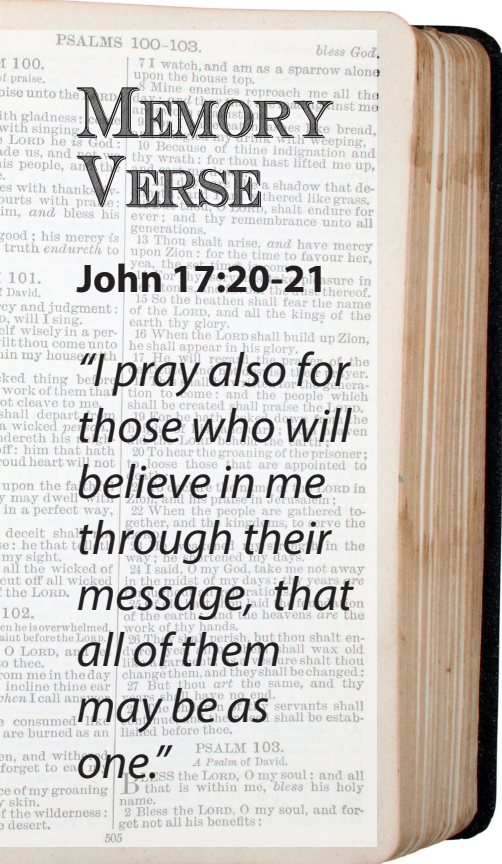
## Discussion:

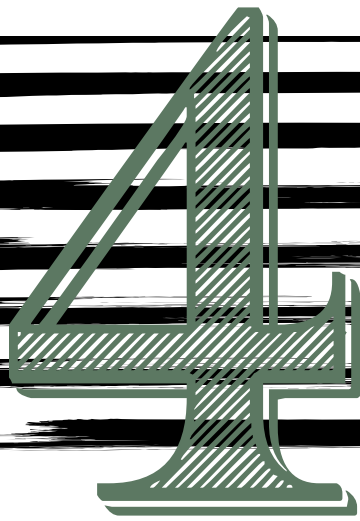
1. Discuss the following statement: "You may find hundreds of faultfinders among professed Christians; but all their criticism will not lead one solitary soul to Christ."  
— D.L. Moody
2. Read John 17:20-21, 23. Why do you suppose Jesus prayed this prayer for all future believers, including you and me?

3. What is the result of unity among the body of Christ?
4. What do you think are some of the greatest causes of disunity among Christians? No wrong answers.
5. Have you ever personally experienced disunity among believers? What did you learn?
6. Do you ever look down on any styles or denominations within Christianity? What steps do you think lead our attitudes in that direction?
7. Read Romans 12:4-5. What role do you play in the body of Christ, the Church?
8. Read John 13:34-35 and Acts 4:32-34. How have you seen love and a oneness of heart and mind on display in the church?
9. What role might you take in seeing it displayed more?

## Wrapping It Up:

If you've ever judged or hurt someone because of their differences, apologize. If you've been hurt, forgive. Take action to do your part to contribute to unity in our church.





# GRACE & TRUTH

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Where did you grow up? How much was Christianity a part of the culture?

### Big Idea:

We faithfully live for Jesus in a post-Christian culture with grace and truth. Truth without grace leads to rules and rebellion. Grace without truth leads to “do whatever” and “believe whatever.”

### Key Scriptures:

★ **John 1:1-5,14** *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

★ **John 8:31-32** *“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

★ **Ephesians 2:8-9** *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

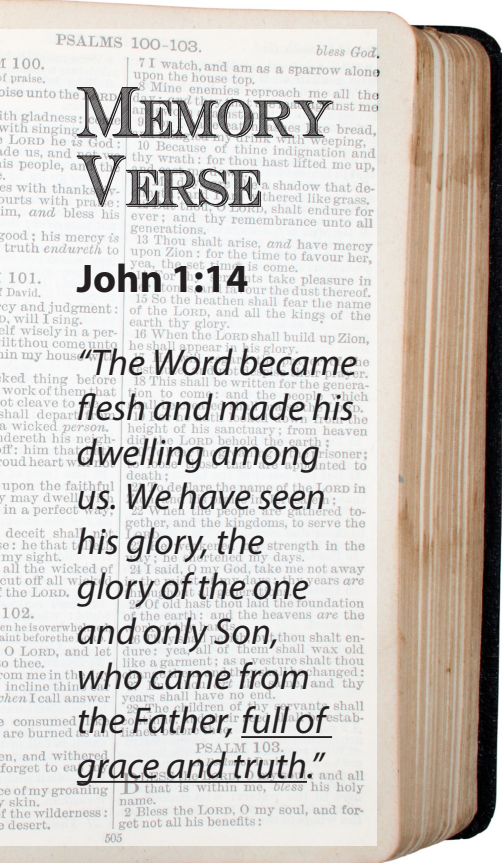
## Discussion:

1. Do you consider the culture you live in to hold Christian values? What makes you think this?
2. Read John 1:1-5,14 and John 14:6. How does seeing Jesus as truth embodied alter your perspective of what it means to speak the truth?
3. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Do you think it's possible to overextend grace? If so, how?

4. Do you tend to lean more toward grace or truth? What does it look like to lean all the way in either direction?
5. Read John 8:31-32. Have you ever shared the truth with someone and unintentionally hurt them as a result? Has someone done this to you? What went wrong?
6. In which areas of your life do you need to accept God's grace over guilt? Where do you need His truth to set you free?
7. What are some specific ways you can live with both grace and truth to influence the culture around you?

## Wrapping It Up:

In your group, pray for one another to be faithful ambassadors of Christ and to, like Jesus, be full of both grace and truth.



the flag of  
ed States of  
merica, and to  
e republic for  
hich it stands,  
one nation  
under God,  
indivisible, with  
liberty and  
justice for all.



# Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
  - Take time to prepare.
  - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
  - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
  - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
  - What is the purpose of our group?
  - What is the vision for our group?
  - What are your expectations?
  - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
  - What are some things we value as a group?
  - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
  - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
  - Encouraging and challenging one another
  - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

# Group Agreement

## OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: \_\_\_\_\_

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## OUR VALUES

**Group Attendance:** To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

**Safe Environment:** To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

**Respect Differences:** To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

**Confidentiality:** To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

**Encouragement for Growth:** To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

**Welcome for Newcomers:** To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

**Shared Ownership:** To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

**Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes:** To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes \_\_\_\_\_
  - Childcare \_\_\_\_\_
  - When we will meet (day of week) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Where we will meet (place) \_\_\_\_\_
  - We will begin at (time) \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_
  - We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
  - Our primary worship service time will be \_\_\_\_\_
  - Date of this agreement \_\_\_\_\_
  - Date we will review this agreement again \_\_\_\_\_
  - Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study \_\_\_\_\_
-



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