

5 WEEKS

**MATTHEW 28: 19-20**

"THEREFORE GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, 20 AND TEACHING THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND SURELY I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE VERY END OF THE AGE."

**MATTHEW 11:28-29**

"COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND BURDENED, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. 29 TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."

**JAMES**

**3:16**  
FOR WHERE YOU HAVE ENVY AND SELFISH AMBITION, THERE YOU FIND DISORDER AND EVERY EVIL PRACTICE.

# PROMISES

**JOHN 14:27**

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE YOU. I DO NOT GIVE TO YOU AS THE WORLD GIVES. DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED AND DO NOT BE AFRAID.


**JOHN 10:2-4**

THE ONE WHO ENTERS BY THE GATE IS THE SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP. 3 THE GATEKEEPER OPENS THE GATE FOR HIM, AND THE SHEEP LISTEN TO HIS VOICE. HE CALLS HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME AND LEADS THEM OUT. 4 WHEN HE HAS BROUGHT OUT ALL HIS OWN, HE GOES ON AHEAD OF THEM, AND HIS SHEEP FOLLOW HIM BECAUSE THEY KNOW HIS VOICE.

**MATTHEW 6:25**

"THEREFORE I TELL YOU, DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR LIFE, WHAT YOU WILL EAT OR DRINK; OR ABOUT YOUR BODY, WHAT YOU WILL WEAR. IS NOT LIFE MORE THAN FOOD, AND THE BODY MORE THAN CLOTHES?"





Many times, we hear what Jesus has done for others. We want to believe that He can do the same for us, but we're not sure it's even possible. Jesus made several promises in the Bible—but what do they mean today? In our series, Promises, we are going to dive into some of them together.

# PROMISES

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# Hearing God's Voice

## WEEK 1

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking It Off:

If you could ask God one question, what would it be?

#### Big Idea:

Jesus is the good shepherd, and we can learn to recognize His voice.

#### Key Scriptures:

John 10:2-4

*The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

Luke 11:28

*He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."*

#### Discussion:

1. Read John 10:2-4. What are some ways people might hear from God, and what does it look like to recognize His voice?
2. How might people be distracted from hearing the voice of God?
3. Read Luke 11:28. In what ways could obedience result in blessing? What are some things that stop people from obeying the Word of God?
4. Share about a time when you heard from God. How did you respond? What did you learn from that experience?
5. Has God called you to do something that you are putting off or avoiding? How might you or those around you be positively affected by your obedience?

#### Group Prayer:

Father, thank You for being someone who cares enough

to speak to us. Thank You for giving us the ability to hear You, whether You speak to us through the Bible, a song, or the words of a friend. Help us to slow down, hear You, and obey whatever You ask of us. We love You, In Jesus' name, amen.

### **This Week:**

Take intentional time this week to listen to God. Follow through on what He communicates to you.

### **Prayer Focus:**

Pray for our community-wide National Day of Prayer event on May 1.

### **Memory Verse:**

#### **PSALM**

**46:10**

HE SAYS, "BE STILL,  
AND KNOW THAT I AM  
GOD; I WILL BE EXALTED  
AMONG THE NATIONS,  
I WILL BE EXALTED IN  
THE EARTH."

**NOTES**



# You're Not Alone in the Struggle

## WEEK 2

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Following Up:

Were you able to take time to listen to God? What do you feel He is pressing on your heart?

#### Kicking It Off:

Share one way you've experienced God this week.

#### Big Idea:

There are times when God takes us into storms not to discipline us, but to disciple us.

#### Key Scriptures:

Matthew 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Mark 4:35-41

*That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

#### Discussion:

1. Which part of this message was most impactful for you and why?

2. Read Matthew 28:18-20. What does it look like for Jesus to be "with you always"?
3. What are some ways difficult experiences can grow someone's faith?
4. Read Mark 4:35-41. What stands out to you in this Scripture?
5. Share about a time when you experienced a hardship or storm that grew your faith. What did you learn about God through that experience?
6. Is there a storm in your life right now that feels impossible, overwhelming, or scary? How are you seeing God in this situation?

### Group Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your presence in our lives. We believe Your Word that You are with us even when we don't feel it. Help us to keep our eyes

on You and may our lives be a reflection of Your love to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

### This Week:

Spend time praying for one another this week. You can share your prayer requests as a group, commit to pray for a specific person, or pray over one another to end the group.

### Prayer Focus:

Pray for our middle school, high school, and college ministries as they are wrapping up their school year programming.

### Memory Verse:

**ISAIAH 41:10**  
 SO DO NOT FEAR, FOR I  
 AM WITH YOU; DO NOT  
 BE DISMAYED, FOR I  
 AM YOUR GOD. I WILL  
 STRENGTHEN YOU AND  
 HELP YOU; I WILL UPHOLD  
 YOU WITH MY RIGHTEOUS  
 RIGHT HAND.

**NOTES**





# Finding Peace in Your Thoughts

## WEEK 3

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking It Off:

What word comes to mind when you hear the word "peace"?

#### Big Idea:

While Jesus doesn't promise a trouble-free life, he does promise you a path to peace.

#### Key Scriptures:

John 14:27

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

Philippians 4:6-7

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

#### Discussion:

1. Share about a time when you experienced the peace of God. What was that like, and what did you learn about His peace?
2. Read John 14:27. What are some differences between worldly peace and godly peace? How can someone experience godly peace?
3. Read Philippians 4:6-7. How do you normally respond to anxious thoughts? How can the practice of gratitude change our thoughts?
4. Are you currently experiencing a worry or anxious thought? Talk about it and spend time praying together.

#### Group Prayer:

Father, thank You for the peace You offer each of us. We cast our worries on You, knowing that You care about us and know the details of our lives. May we experience Your peace in a new way. In Jesus' name, amen.



## **This Week:**

Spend time talking to God about any worry or anxious thoughts you may be facing. Consider how His presence impacts your thoughts and be prepared to share your thoughts next week.

## **Prayer Focus:**

Pray for our college team that is going on a mission trip to El Salvador with our partner, La Case de Mi Padre.

## **Memory Verse:**

**JOHN**

**14:27**

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE YOU. I DO NOT GIVE TO YOU AS THE WORLD GIVES. DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED AND DO NOT BE AFRAID."

# NOTES



# Finding Freedom from Your Worries

## WEEK 4

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Following Up:

How did meditating on God's peace and presence change your thoughts regarding your worries and anxieties?

#### Kicking It Off:

What are some differences between worry and concern?

#### Big Idea:

God loves us and cares about the details of our lives. Through Him, we can find freedom from our worries.

#### Key Scriptures:

Matthew 6:25-26

*"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly*

*Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"*

Psalm 145:18 NLT

*The Lord is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth.*

#### Discussion:

1. Which part of this message resonated with you or stood out to you the most and why?
2. Read Matthew 6:25-26. How do these verses influence the way you view worry? What do you think about God caring about the details of your life?
3. Talk about a time when you were worried about a situation. How did God show His faithfulness? How could that experience help you remember His faithfulness today?
4. Share about an area of your life where you tend to worry. Talk about how you could respond well

when faced with that worry.  
Then share how you could  
surrender the rest to God.

### **Group Prayer:**

Father, thank You for the great love You have for each of us. You care about the big and small details of our lives, and we praise You for that. Help us cast our worries on You, knowing that You're in control and we're not. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **This Week:**

Take some time to share any worries you have with God, resting in the face that He is kind and trustworthy.

### **Prayer Focus:**

Pray for kids and students as school wraps up for the year. Pray that they have a safe place to go this summer and that they continue to grow in their faith.

### **Memory Verse:**

**PSALM 145:18 NLT**

THE LORD IS CLOSE TO  
ALL WHO CALL ON HIM,  
YES, TO ALL WHO CALL  
ON HIM IN TRUTH.

**NOTES**



# When You're Tired of Being Tired

## WEEK 5

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking It Off:

What are some of your go-to ways to find rest?

#### Big Idea:

Jesus is gentle and humble in heart. We can live life His way and find deep rest in our souls.

#### Key Scriptures:

Matthew 11:28-30

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

#### Discussion:

1. Read Matthew 11:28-30. How do you typically think about rest? How do Jesus' words influence your perspective? What do they

make you think, feel, and want to do?

2. What are some differences between physical rest and soul rest?
3. Talk about a time when you experienced the rest Jesus described in Matthew 11:28-30. What was that experience like, and how could you have that again?
4. Share as openly as you can with your group: How are you really doing lately, and what do you need from Jesus? How can you help one another share these burdens together?

#### Group Prayer:

Father, You are more than enough. We lay aside all our efforts to earn our worth and make a name for ourselves. Instead, we trust in Your abundant grace. As we work this week, please bless us with Your rest, knowing we are fully loved and accepted. In Jesus' name, amen.



## **This Week:**

Write out Matthew 11:28-30 on paper and place it somewhere you will see it regularly. Spend intentional time reading it this week.

## **Prayer Focus:**

Pray for our worship team as they get ready to lead people at RiseFest in Sheldon, Iowa.

## **Memory Verse:**

**MATTHEW 11:28**

"COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND BURDENED, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

**NOTES**

# 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.
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: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_



**SUNNYBROOK**  
community church

5601 Sunnybrook Drive  
Sioux City, Iowa 51106  
[www.sunnybrookchurch.org](http://www.sunnybrookchurch.org)