

4 WEEKS

# ELI PSIDE ELI PSIDE



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## WEEK 1

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### **Kicking it off:**

Jock, nerd, rocker, gangsta, gamer, cheerleader—which high school stereotype would describe you?

#### **Big Idea:**

Living for the approval of people keeps you from the purposes of God.

#### **Key Scriptures:**

##### **Hebrews 11:24-26**

*“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of*

*Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”*

##### **Acts 5:29**

*Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!”*

##### **Nehemiah 6:1-3**

*“Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates. So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But I realized they were plotting to harm me, so I replied by sending this message to them: “I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?”*

## Discussion:

1. Have you ever been called a people-pleaser? Why or why not?
2. Our big idea for this week is “Living for the approval of people keeps you from the purposes of God.” How do you see that in your own life or in the lives of those around you?
3. Read Hebrews 11:24-26 and Acts 5:29. Compare and contrast Moses’ and Peter’s actions with today’s cultural norms and modern success stories. What kind of courage and resolve you think it took for them to live in such a way?
4. Discuss the “treasures” of this life that you may be tempted to live for versus the greater value of the cause of Christ. How do you keep your focus on the latter?
5. Read Nehemiah 6:1-3. Nehemiah was called to a great work and refused to be distracted by his enemies. To what distraction do you need to say, “I’m doing a great work; I can’t come down.”
6. In what ways have you valued pleasing others over pleasing God, or have

you allowed yourself to be distracted from God’s ultimate purpose for you?

7. What one thing could you do to shift the greater value to God?

## Wrapping It Up:

Pray this prayer together: God, there is power in purpose — especially Your purpose. We’re asking You to refocus our attentions to the passions and plans You’ve placed in our lives. Help us to make pleasing You the main thing. Amen.

## Memory Verse:

*“Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!”*

**Acts 5:29**

OBEY

GOD

GOD

OBEY

SURRENDER OVER

CONTROL

WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### **Kicking it off:**

Who rules the TV remote in your house? How did that come about?

### **Big Idea:**

When you try to control what you can't, you get anxious. When you give it to God, you get peace.

### **Key Scriptures:**

#### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."*

#### **Genesis 16:1-4**

*"Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named*

*Hagar; so she said to Abram, The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived."*

#### **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. Even if you've read or memorized Proverbs 3:5-6, read it again like you've never seen it before. How is this Scripture inconsistent with culture?
2. Why do you think we tend to naturally choose control over trust and surrender?
3. In which areas of your life are you most controlling: family, work, money, friendships, or something else? How does this impact people you care about?
4. Talk about the last time you felt completely out of control. What did you learn?
5. Reflect on Abraham and Sarai's story from Genesis 16:1-4. Have you ever tried taking God's plans into your own hands? How did that turn out?
6. Share a past or present experience where you've given God your trust. How are you practically doing this? What does it look like to give this to God?
7. Read Philippians 4:6-7. Let this verse be a reminder to pray and surrender every time you feel the need to control.

## Wrapping It Up:

How can you surrender to God what you are most trying to control and what is your next step this week? Pray for one another as a group.

## Memory Verse:

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."*

## Proverbs 3:5-6

TRUST  
IN THE  
LORD  
LORD  
IN THE  
TRUST

DISCIPLINE OVER

REGRET

WEEK 3  
WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Which is hardest to pass up: a tasty treat, a great sale, or mindless binge-watching? Which is hardest to do: work out, eat healthy, or practice spiritual disciplines?

### Big Idea:

Discipline is choosing between what you want now and what you want most.

### Key Scriptures:

**Romans 7:15, 18-19, 24-25 NLT**

*"I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate... I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I*

*don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway... Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord."*

### **1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NLT**

*"Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should."*



## Discussion:

1. Read Romans 7:15, 18-19, 24-25. What is the thing you want most to do, but struggle to do it? Invite God's guidance into your answer.
2. How does seeing the apostle Paul's struggle encourage you in your own challenges to do what you want most?
3. In this week's message we heard: "Discipline is choosing between what you want now and what you want most." What is the difference, and how does that statement play out in your own life?
4. Why do you think our actions tend to favor the pain of regret over the pain of discipline?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. What are some areas in your life where you feel you lack discipline? What will your life look like in five years if you don't make changes?
6. What goals could you set that would require you to rely on God's strength and grace?
7. Share a story of when you had success in choosing discipline over regret. What worked for you? How can you put that into play now?

## Wrapping It Up:

What do you need to do now to achieve what you want most? Team up with someone and commit to keep in contact throughout the week to encourage one other.

## Memory Verse:

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."*

**1 Corinthians 9:24-25**

A CROWN  
THAT  
WILL LAST  
FOREVER  
FOBELEB  
WILL LAST  
THAT  
A CROWN

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking it off:

If you got two extra hours each day, what would you do more of?

#### Big Idea:

A barrier to a meaningful life is not lack of commitment – it's over commitment.

#### Key Scriptures:

##### Luke 10:38-42

*"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to [Jesus] and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do*

*the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

#### Discussion:

1. Read Luke 10:38-42. Do you identify most with Mary or Martha? Explain.
2. Jesus said "few things are needed – or indeed only one." What do you think He meant by that statement?
3. Why do you think we're tempted to allow urgent things to rule our lives?
4. In this week's message we heard that busyness does not equal productivity. What busyness can you cut out of your life?
5. Name three urgent things

you need to do and three important things you need to do. Which are getting more of your time?

6. Do you have a process or trick that reminds you to choose important over urgent? Share an example.
7. What's the most important thing you've been too distracted to pursue? What do you need to stop doing to pursue it?
8. Jesus said that Mary had chosen what was better, and that was to sit at Jesus' feet and just be with Him. How much time do you spend doing that?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

What are you saying "yes" to that you need to say "no" to? Share out loud and create a deadline to take your first steps (like, today). Partner up with someone to hold each another accountable this week.

### **Memory Verse:**

*Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

**Luke 10: 41-42**

MARY HAS  
CHOSEN  
WHAT IS  
BETTER  
AND IT  
WILL NOT BE  
TAKEN AWAY  
FROM HER  
TAKEN AWAY  
WILL NOT BE  
AND IT  
BETTER  
WHAT IS  
CHOSEN  
MARY HAS

# NOTES:

# 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.
  - 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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