



Lesson #1:

"Will the Real God Please Stand Up?"

## Daily Devotions for the Week of October 1-6

### Monday, October 1 Read Psalm 46

What would it look like for you to "be still and know God?" \_\_\_\_\_ Where are you busy, perhaps needlessly and how can a concentration of God help re-prioritize?

\_\_\_\_\_ How is being still vital if we are to be more aware of and grow closer to God?

### Tuesday, October 2 Read Proverbs 3:1-35

There is a wealth of practical wisdom in these short aphorisms. Try writing down a few that speak especially to your life and keep them with you today, perhaps even memorizing them. Re-read vv.5-7. What would it look like for you if you made these a priority today?

\_\_\_\_\_ Think of some specific examples and circumstances.

### Wednesday, October 3 Read Matthew 6:19-25

Read v.25 first, then go back and read the whole selection. How does this verse act as the main theme of Christ's teaching here, addressing how we see, who we serve and what we value?

\_\_\_\_\_ What might be the "treasures in heaven" that we are supposed to emphasize and value?

\_\_\_\_\_ Prayerfully discuss with God the things you worry about...that show your real priorities!

### Thursday, October 4 Read Matthew 6:26-33

Have you ever thought of worry as a form of blasphemy? In many ways it is as it is rooted in a trust in ourselves (and a knowledge of our very real weakness and powerlessness) rather than in God. Worry makes us reserved, timid and ungenerous. Reflect on this as you consider what you worry about. What is the proper response to worry (look closely at v.33)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What would that look like- specifically- in your life?

### Friday, October 5 Read Mark 9:38-50

On the one hand this passage seems to be a random collection of dire warnings, but note the underlying theme: Just who exactly is God to you and how does that manifest itself in how you live your life and treat others. If this is indeed the only question and attitude that really matters, what does it mean to be "salted with fire (v.49)?" \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What does loss of "saltiness" look like in our Christian lives? \_\_\_\_\_

### Saturday, October 6 Read James 4:4-8

James uses harsh language here to remind us that to put our trust in anything other than God- even our own abilities- is nothing less than infidelity. We live in a culture that puts faith material possessions, social status and physical appearance (at least to judge by what we spend our time and money on!). What are some ways we as the church can rise above the false gods of this world?

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# Small Group Discussion Guide

## Series Introduction

## Session #1

*What would your priorities look like if you knew you were going to die in a day or two? What would matter and what wouldn't? What would you stress about, if anything? The truth is we are all terminal cases and the things we put such stock in will be useless to us. All that really matters is how we make use of the time, material and relationships with which God has temporarily entrusted us. For the month of October, we're going to challenge ourselves to rethink our priorities and ask what we would do with our resources, our time and our talents if we truly understood where we stand as stewards of God's abundance.*

## *"Will the Real God Please Stand Up?"*

### Part 1– Life Signs

- Read the series introduction aloud. In your group, discuss the following question: "If you knew you were going to die in a few days, what would you do? Why? How do the answers to these questions reflect what truly matters to us and how do the ways we actually live line up? Look back on the readings and responses of the group from Wednesday, October 3

### Part 2– Fully Functional

- Ask the group to define what a "god" is in our modern life. In the sermon on Sunday, Larry suggested that "a god is that which you decide is **worth** your time, money, talent and energy." Do you agree or disagree and why? Give some examples of modern gods,,,or more accurately, "idols!"

- The reading from Thursday suggested that worry might be considered a form of blasphemy. Read Matthew 6:26-33 aloud and discuss this idea. What is the source of our worry...and subsequent hesitation to live abundantly?
- Go back and discuss any of the week's readings that particularly struck any members of your group. What did Mark mean by "salted with fire (Mark 9:49)?" Why is James so harsh in his passage from last Saturday and is it applicable today?

### Part 3– Abundant Living

- Share prayer concerns with your group...especially those focused on things we might be worried about. Try this exercise—have each person take the name of another in the group and covenant to pray daily for that person's current concerns.

### Lap #1

*During this month, we'll be talking about the concept of Christian stewardship as well. Stewardship of course is the reminder that we, personally, own absolutely nothing. Like the servants in the parable of the talents, we are simply entrusted with our talents, resources and lives for a short period and we are ultimately accountable for how we use God's gifts. Take some time this week to reflect on what you think of as **your time, your talents and your stuff.***

