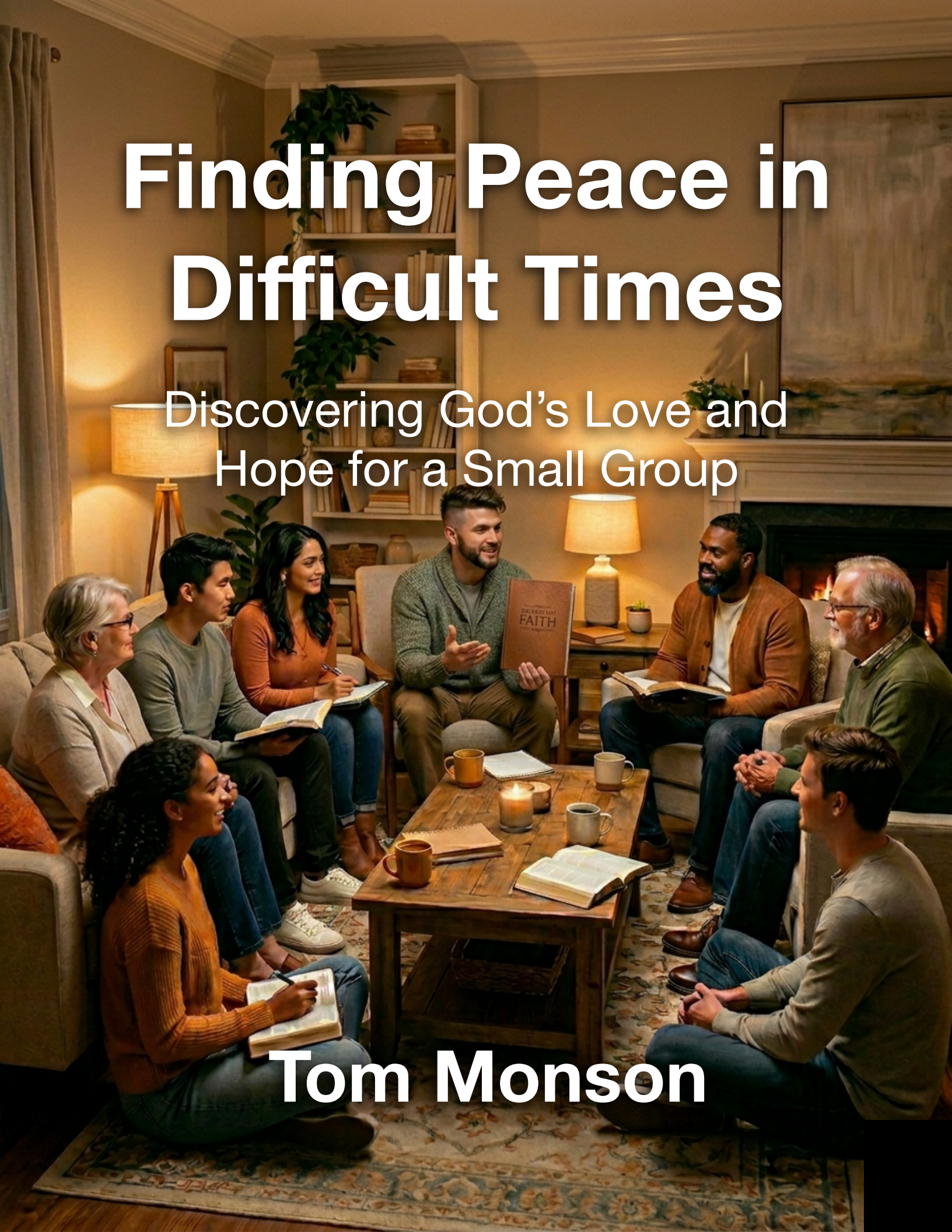




Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Discovering God's Love and
Hope for a Small Group

Tom Monson

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Hope for a Small Group

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Foreword

If you're reading this right now, this book is for you.

You may be searching for answers. You might be tired of feeling anxious, lonely, angry, or overwhelmed. Maybe you're carrying guilt from your past, struggling in your marriage, or simply trying to find some peace in the middle of a chaotic life.

Wherever you are, you're welcome here.

I didn't write this as a Bible scholar or a professional minister. I wrote it as a man who has been through deep pain. In 1992, I lost my mother, my son, and the love of my life, all within six months. I was so broken that even hearing the name of God made me angry.

But God never gave up on me.

In my darkest season, I discovered the healing power of God's Word when it's shared honestly with others. That's why I created this book — so you could experience that same healing in a safe, caring group.

We begin with the most important truth of all: **God's Unconditional Love**. From there, we walk through the real struggles we all face — anxiety, loneliness, anger, fear, forgiveness, and more.

My prayer is simple: that as you go through these lessons, you will find real peace, real hope, and a deeper understanding of how much God truly loves you.

Welcome. You're in the right place.

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Introduction

I wrote this study because I believe real fellowship is one of the most important parts of the Christian faith. When people of faith come together in small groups and get honest with each other and with God's Word, real transformation happens.

I'm not a pastor or a Bible scholar. I'm simply a man who has walked through deep pain. In 1992, I lost my mother, my son, and the love of my life — all within six months. That season was so dark that even hearing the name of God made me angry.

But God never gave up on me.

Through all the brokenness, I discovered the healing power of God's Word when it's shared in genuine fellowship. That's why I created this study — to help others experience the same thing.

We begin with the most important truth of all: **God's Unconditional Love for Us**. Everything else in the Christian life flows from knowing and receiving this love. From there, the 13 lessons in this study address the practical, everyday struggles we all face — anxiety, loneliness, anger, temptation, fear, forgiveness, trust, contentment, prayer, and the challenges of marriage.

Whether you're using this in a living room, a church room, a business setting, or online, my prayer is that these lessons will help you find God's peace in the middle of life's storms — and that you will experience the joy of growing together with others who are on the same journey.

Let's begin with the foundation that changes everything: the unstoppable, unconditional love of God.

Leading a Small Group



Thank you for stepping up to lead this small group. God sees your heart to serve, and He will bless you for it.

You don't need to be a pastor or a Bible expert. You don't even need to have all the answers. Your most important job is simply to **lead with love** and create a safe, welcoming place where people can be honest and grow together.

The very first lesson in this study is **God's Unconditional Love**. We made this the opening lesson because it is the foundation for everything else. Many people carry hidden shame or the quiet belief that they're not good enough for God. Starting here helps every person understand that God's love is not something they have to earn — it is freely given, and nothing can separate them from it.

I remember one Sunday sitting in church when the preacher was strongly condemning gay people. His words felt harsh and unloving. After the service, I gently reminded him, "God loves them too." That moment has stayed with me. My hope is that no one in your group ever feels condemned or excluded. When people truly know they are loved by God exactly as they are, their hearts begin to open.

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Who Should Attend?

This group is for **everyone** — men and women, married and single, young and old, longtime Christians and those who are still exploring their faith. Invite anyone you think might benefit.

How to Lead the Group

Keep It Simple and Relational

Start each meeting with Fellowship Time so people can share their names and one good thing from their week. Pray together, go through the lesson, and spend most of your time in the Group Discussion. Give people quiet time to reflect, close in prayer, and enjoy refreshments together.

You Don't Need to Be the Expert

If someone asks a question you can't answer, simply say, "That's a great question. I don't know, but let's see what God's Word says together." Your honesty will make people feel more comfortable.

Lead with Love

Listen more than you speak. Create a safe atmosphere where people feel free to share. Celebrate honesty. If someone is quiet, gently invite them in, but never pressure them.

When Difficult or Controversial Topics Come Up

Respond with grace. You might say something like, "This is an important topic, and God loves every person deeply. Let's remember the foundation we started with — His unconditional love."

If possible, connect it to a future lesson. For example, "This actually ties in really well with what we'll be talking about on forgiveness — I hope you'll be here for that."

A Final Word of Encouragement

Your role isn't to be the expert. Your role is to be a loving guide. Pray for your group members during the week and trust the Holy Spirit to do the real work.

Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples. Once your group finishes this study, we strongly encourage every member to buy their own copy of this book and start a new small group with people they care about. That's how the gospel spreads and lives are changed.

How to Invite People to Your Group

One of the most effective things you can do as a group leader is simply invite people. You don't have to be fancy or perfect — just be real and sincere. People are much more likely to come when they feel genuinely wanted.

Simple Ways to Invite Someone:

- **In person:** “Hey, I’m leading a small group using this book called *Finding Peace in Difficult Times*. We’re just getting started and I’d really love for you to join us. Want to come check it out?”
- **By text or message:** “Hey, I’m starting a small group and I immediately thought of you. It’s very relaxed — we just talk about real life and what God’s Word says about it. Would you like to come?”
- **After church or an event:** “We’re starting a small group on Wednesday nights. It’s laid-back, no pressure to talk if you don’t want to. Want to come with me?”

What to Tell Them About the Group:

- It’s open to **everyone** — men, women, married or single.
- We meet for about an hour to an hour and a half.
- There’s no pressure to share if you’re not comfortable.
- We talk about real-life struggles and how God’s Word helps us.
- We always make time to pray and enjoy being together.

A Simple Invitation You Can Use:

“Hey, I’ve started a small group and I thought of you right away. We’re using a book called *Finding Peace in Difficult Times*. We talk about things like anxiety, forgiveness, marriage, and learning to trust God. It’s very relaxed — nobody has to have all the answers. I’d really love for you to come check it out with me.”

A Few Helpful Tips:

- Pray before you invite someone.
- Be clear about the day, time, and where you’re meeting.
- Let them know they’re welcome to just listen the first time.
- Follow up with a friendly reminder the day before.

The best invitations come from the heart. If you’re excited about the group, that excitement will come through. Don’t be afraid to invite people — you never know who might really need what your group has to offer.

Group Member Contact List

Study Name: Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Group Leader: _____

Meeting Day & Time: _____

Location: _____

Please write your name, phone number, email, and how you heard about the group so we can stay connected and pray for one another.

Name

Phone/email

Notes / Prayer Requests:

Lesson Summaries

Lesson 1: God's Unconditional Love for Us

Explores Romans 8:38-39 and the life-changing truth that nothing — not our failures, doubts, pain, or circumstances — can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. This foundational lesson reminds us we are deeply loved exactly as we are.

Lesson 2: Finding Peace in Anxious Times

Based on Philippians 4:6-7, this lesson shows how to replace anxiety with God's supernatural peace by bringing every worry to Him in honest prayer and thanksgiving.

Lesson 3: Overcoming Loneliness

From Hebrews 13:5, we discover we are never truly alone because God has promised never to leave or forsake us, even in our most isolated moments.

Lesson 4: Dealing with Anger

Ephesians 4:26-27 teaches how to handle anger without sinning and why we should not let the sun go down on it, preventing bitterness and giving the enemy a foothold.

Lesson 5: Battling Temptation

Using 1 Corinthians 10:13, this lesson encourages us that our temptations are common, God is faithful, and He always provides a way of escape.

Lesson 6: Overcoming Fear

Based on 2 Timothy 1:7, it declares that fear does not come from God and shows how to replace it with His power, love, and sound mind.

Lesson 7: Forgiving Others

From Colossians 3:13, it explains why we must forgive as the Lord forgave us and how unforgiveness hurts us more than the offender.

Lesson 8: Forgiving Yourself

Using 1 John 1:9, this lesson addresses the heavy burden of shame and guilt, showing that when God forgives us, we can — and must — forgive ourselves.

Lesson 9: Trusting God in Difficult Times

Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches us to trust the Lord with all our heart, stop leaning on our own understanding, and surrender every area to Him so He can direct our paths.

Lesson 10: Finding Contentment in a Material World

From Philippians 4:11-12, Paul's secret of contentment in prison shows that true contentment comes from Christ, not circumstances.

Lesson 11: The Power of Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (the Lord's Prayer) gives us Jesus' model for powerful prayer — worship, surrender, dependence, forgiveness, and protection.

Lesson 12: God's Design for Marriage

Genesis 2:18 and 2:24 reveals God's original plan for marriage as a lifelong covenant where two become one.

Lesson 13: Love, Respect, and Communication in Marriage

Drawing from Ephesians 5:33 and 4:15, this lesson explores how meeting the needs for love and respect, combined with speaking the truth in love, builds strong, godly marriages.

Lesson 1: God's Unconditional Love



Explores Romans 8:38-39 and the life-changing truth that nothing — not our failures, doubts, pain, or circumstances — can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. This foundational lesson reminds us we are deeply loved exactly as we are.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. In a world that often makes us feel unworthy or unloved, help us grasp the depth of Your unconditional love for us. Open our hearts to receive it fully as we study Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verses today are Romans 8:38-39. It says: *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

God’s love for you is not based on what you do. It is not earned, deserved, or conditional. It is unconditional — constant, unbreakable, and deeper than any failure, mistake, or season of doubt you have ever walked through.

This truth changed my life. After the dark days of 1992 — when I lost my mother, my son, and the love of my life in quick succession — I felt completely unlovable. I was angry at God, angry at the world, and angry at myself. I carried deep shame and guilt, convinced that my failures and pain had pushed God’s love away. For a long time I lived as if His love had limits, as if I had finally done something that made me unworthy of it.

But God kept pursuing me. Through His Word, through quiet moments, and through the kindness of others, He slowly showed me that nothing — not my anger, not my grief, not my worst decisions — could separate me from His love. That realization brought healing I never thought possible. I didn’t have to clean myself up first. I didn’t have to earn my way back. He loved me right where I was, in the middle of the mess.

This is the heart of the gospel. God didn’t wait for us to become perfect. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). His love is not fragile. It is not based on our performance, our mood, or our past. It is rooted in who He is — a Father who loves His children with an everlasting love.

When we truly receive this unconditional love, it changes everything. It frees us from shame. It gives us confidence to come to God honestly. It empowers us to love others the same way — not because they deserve it, but because we have been loved first.

Group Discussion

1. When have you felt most unlovable or unworthy of God’s love? What made you feel that way?
2. How does it feel to hear that nothing — not your worst failures, not your doubts, not your circumstances — can separate you from God’s love in Christ? Does that bring comfort, or is it hard to believe sometimes?
3. What would change in your daily life if you lived fully convinced of God’s unconditional love for you? How might it affect the way you see yourself, your relationships, or your fears?

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Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Romans 8:38-39 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What makes it hard for me to fully believe God's love for me is unconditional?

Is there something from my past or present that I still feel might separate me from His love?

How can you practically live this week as if you truly believed God loves you completely — right now, with no conditions, no performance required, and nothing you can do to lose it?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a short prayer thanking God for His unchanging love and asking Him to help you receive it deeply.

[illegible]

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Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your unconditional, unbreakable love. Help us believe it, receive it, and live in it every day. Remove every lie that tells us we are unloved or unworthy. Fill us with the confidence that comes from knowing nothing can separate us from Your love in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Romans 5:8 – *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Jeremiah 31:3 – *“The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.’”*

Ephesians 3:17-19 – *“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge...”*

1 John 4:9-10 – *“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

Lesson 2: Finding Peace in Anxious Times



Based on Philippians 4:6-7, this lesson shows how to replace anxiety with God's supernatural peace by bringing every worry to Him in honest prayer and thanksgiving.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people joining us, take a moment and go around the room or on the screen and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Many of us carry worries and anxious thoughts. We ask that You would calm our hearts as we open Your Word. Help us learn how to bring our fears to You and receive the peace that only You can give. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is Philippians 4:6-7. It says: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests*

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to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

I'll never forget the night I learned how true this verse really is. Years ago, I was lying in bed with my mind racing. I was worried about money, about my health, about my kids — everything seemed to be falling apart at once. The more I tried to stop worrying, the worse it got. My stomach was in knots and I couldn't shut my mind off.

Then I remembered this verse. So I got out of bed, got down on my knees, and I started praying. I told God every single thing I was afraid of. I held nothing back. I didn't try to sound spiritual. I was honest.

And then something beautiful happened. As I prayed, I began thanking Him for the ways He had taken care of me in the past. The more I thanked Him, the calmer I became. By the time I finished praying, a peace had come over me that I can't even explain. I went back to bed and actually slept through the night.

That night taught me something I've never forgotten: God doesn't want us to carry our worries alone. He wants us to hand them over to Him.

Think about what this verse is really saying. The God who created the universe is telling you and me, “Bring your worries to me. All of them.” He doesn't say some things are too small or too big. He says *anything*.

And when we do, He doesn't just take our worries — He replaces them with His peace. A peace so strong it stands guard over our hearts like a soldier protecting something precious.

Group Discussion

1. What tends to make you anxious the most? Even Jesus Himself experienced deep distress. The night before His crucifixion, He was in such agony that He sweat drops of blood as He prayed. What's been weighing on your mind lately? Is it your health, your finances, your children, your marriage, or maybe uncertainty about the future?
2. When you're worried, what's your usual response? Do you tend to worry quietly by yourself, become irritable with others, try to control everything, or maybe lose sleep at night? Be honest with the group — how does anxiety typically show up in your life?
3. What would it look like for you to actually “present your requests to God”? What's one practical way you could hand your worries over to Him this week? Would it mean setting aside time to pray every morning, writing your worries down and giving them to God, or maybe sharing them with someone in this group for prayer support?

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Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Philippians 4:6-7 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What specific worry or anxiety am I carrying right now that I haven't fully given to God?

What would my life look like if I truly believed God's promise of peace?

What is one practical thing I can do this week to hand my worries over to God?

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Use the space below to write out a prayer, telling God honestly how you're feeling and asking Him to replace your anxiety with His peace.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for bringing us together today. We give You every worry and anxious thought that we wrote down. Please replace our anxiety with Your perfect peace. Guard our hearts and minds like You promised. Help us walk in freedom this week, trusting that You're in control. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Isaiah 26:3 – *“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.”*

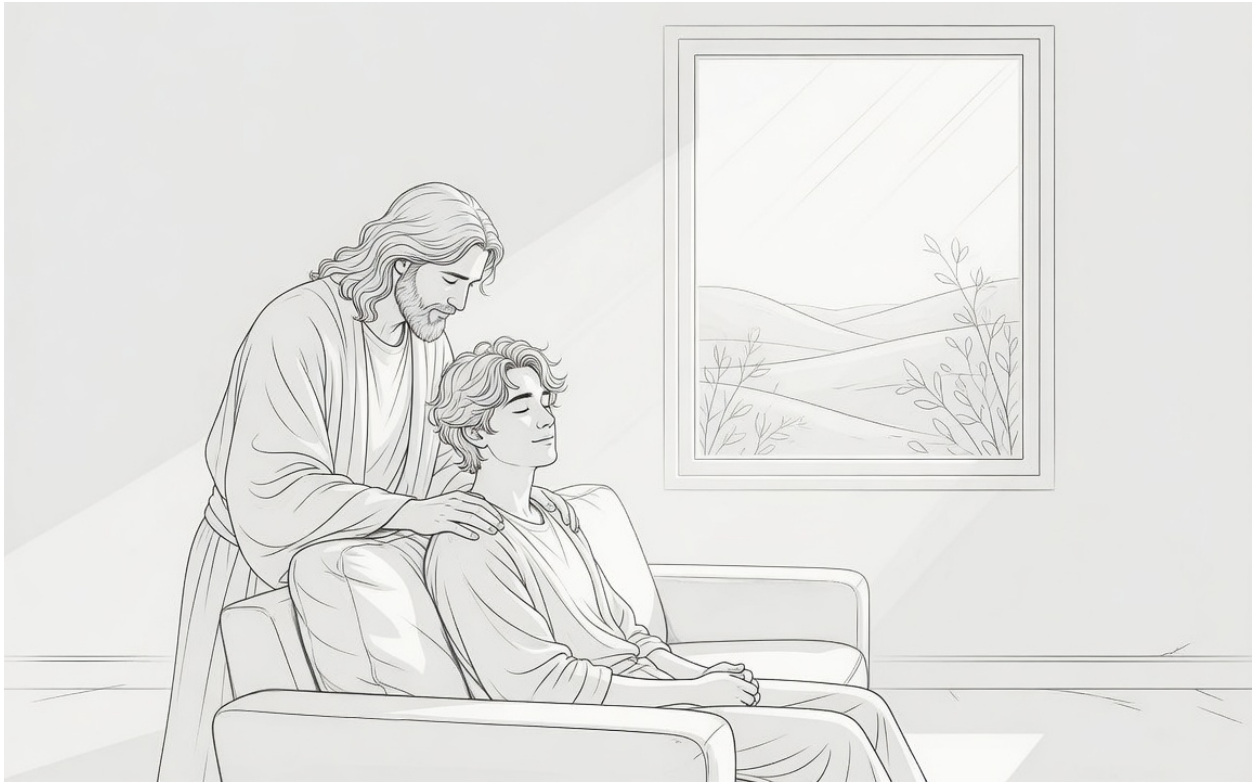
John 14:27 – *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

1 Peter 5:7 – *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

Psalms 55:22 – *“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”*

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Lesson 3: Overcoming Loneliness



From Hebrews 13:5, we discover we are never truly alone because God has promised never to leave or forsake us, even in our most isolated moments.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Some of us feel lonely even when we're surrounded by people. Help us discover the truth of Your constant presence as we study Your Word tonight. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is Hebrews 13:5. It says: *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”*

One of the biggest lies loneliness tells us is that we are completely alone. But God makes one of the strongest, most comforting promises in all of Scripture: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

I remember a season many years ago when the loneliness felt almost unbearable. I would come home to an empty house after a long day. The lights were off, the rooms were quiet, and the silence felt heavy. There was no one there to ask how my day went or to share a simple conversation with. Even when I was around other people during the day, I often still felt isolated on the inside. It was as if I was watching life happening around me, but I wasn’t really part of it.

In those quiet, difficult moments, this verse became very important to me. At first, it was hard to believe. How could God say He would never leave me when I felt so abandoned and forgotten? But I started reminding myself of those words, especially late at night when the loneliness hit the hardest. Slowly, something began to shift in my heart. I started to sense that even in the empty house and the heavy silence, I wasn’t truly by myself. God was there with me.

Loneliness is a very real and painful emotion. It can make us feel forgotten, unwanted, and invisible. It can creep in after a divorce, after losing someone we love, when the kids move out, or even when we’re in a room full of people but still feel disconnected. But God’s promise cuts right through that lie. He doesn’t just say He’ll be around sometimes. He promises to be with us always — in the good times and especially in the hard times.

This promise is not dependent on our feelings or our circumstances. It is a solemn vow from the God who cannot lie. He sees you right now. He knows exactly how you feel. And He has promised never to leave your side.

This truth has the power to change how we experience loneliness. You may feel alone, but you are never truly alone. God is with you.

Group Discussion

1. When do you feel the most lonely? Is it when you’re at home alone, in a crowd, after everyone leaves on Sunday, or maybe late at night when the house is quiet?
2. How does it feel to know God promises “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”? Does that promise bring you comfort, or does it sometimes feel hard to believe?

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3. Who is one person you could reach out to this week who might also be feeling lonely? Or what's one small step you could take to connect more deeply with God when you feel alone?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Hebrews 13:5 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

When have I felt the loneliest recently, and what triggered it?

Do I truly believe God is with me even when I feel completely alone?

What is one practical step I can take this week to fight loneliness — either by drawing closer to God or reaching out to someone else?

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Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a short prayer asking God to help you feel His presence.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You that we are never truly alone because You are always with us. Comfort those who feel lonely tonight. Give us courage to reach out to others and to draw near to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Deuteronomy 31:6 – *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Psalms 27:10 – *“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.”*

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.”*

Matthew 28:20 – *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

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Lesson 4: Dealing with Anger



Ephesians 4:26-27 teaches how to handle anger without sinning and why we should not let the sun go down on it, preventing bitterness and giving the enemy a foothold.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. We all struggle with anger at times. Some of us carry it quietly, while others let it spill out. Help us learn from Your Word how to handle anger in a way that honors You and brings freedom instead of destruction. Open our hearts tonight. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is Ephesians 4:26-27. It says: *“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”*

This is one of the most honest and practical verses in the entire Bible about anger. God doesn’t pretend we will never get angry. He knows we are human. Anger is a natural emotion that rises up when we feel hurt, disrespected, threatened, or when things don’t go the way we expected. The issue is not whether we get angry — the issue is what we do with that anger.

The verse gives us two clear, lifesaving instructions. First, don’t let your anger lead you into sin. Second, don’t carry it overnight. Unresolved anger gives the enemy a foothold in our lives — a place where bitterness, resentment, and even revenge can take root.

I remember a time when I let anger fester for days. Someone had hurt me deeply, and instead of dealing with it, I replayed the offense over and over in my mind. The longer I held onto it, the more bitter and irritable I became. It started affecting my sleep, my relationships, and even my health. I was giving the devil exactly what he wanted — a foothold. When I finally brought that anger to God and chose to forgive, it was like a heavy weight was lifted off my chest. The relief was immediate and real.

Anger itself isn’t the sin. But when we let it control us, when we rehearse it, when we go to bed angry, it opens the door to greater problems. Some of us explode and say things we later regret. Others stuff it down and let it turn into coldness and resentment. Both paths are dangerous. God’s way is better: deal with it quickly, honestly, and with His help.

If you’re carrying anger right now — toward a spouse, a child, a friend, a coworker, or even toward God — this verse is speaking directly to you. Don’t let the sun go down on it tonight. Bring it to God before you go to bed.

Group Discussion

1. What kinds of things tend to make you angry? Is it traffic, something your family does, feeling disrespected, when plans fall apart, or when you feel out of control?
2. How do you usually handle your anger? Do you tend to explode and say things you later regret, shut down and go silent, hold onto it for days and let it build up inside, or maybe try to pretend it doesn’t bother you?
3. Is there a situation right now — big or small — where you need to let go of anger before the sun goes down, like the verse says? What would taking that step look like for you this week?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Ephesians 4:26-27 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

Who or what am I currently angry about?

Have I been letting the sun go down on my anger, and what is that doing to my heart and my relationships?

What would it look like for me to release this anger and forgive?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a prayer asking God to help you release any anger you're carrying.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us not to sin in our anger. Teach us to release bitterness quickly and give us self-control. Heal the areas in our hearts that cause us to get angry easily. Give us the courage to forgive and the wisdom to deal with our anger before it takes root. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

James 1:19-20 – *“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”*

Proverbs 15:1 – *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

Ephesians 4:31-32 – *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

Colossians 3:8 – *“But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.”*

Lesson 5: Battling Temptation



Using 1 Corinthians 10:13, this lesson encourages us that our temptations are common, God is faithful, and He always provides a way of escape.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. We all face temptation in different ways. Help us learn from Your Word how to stand strong and recognize the way of escape You always provide. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is 1 Corinthians 10:13. It says: *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."*

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

This is one of the most encouraging and practical promises in the entire Bible. First, it tells us that whatever temptation we're facing is not strange or unique to us. Others have struggled with the same things. Second, and most important, God is faithful. He knows exactly what we can handle, and He will never allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to endure. And third, when temptation comes, He always provides a way out.

I remember a season when I was battling a strong temptation. It wasn't something dramatic, but it was persistent. Every day it would pull at me, and I felt like I was fighting a battle I couldn't win. I tried to fight it in my own strength — white-knuckling it, trying to ignore it, even trying to bargain with God. Nothing worked. The more I fought on my own, the more defeated I felt.

Then I really started meditating on this verse. The part that stood out to me was “God is faithful.” He wasn't leaving me to fight alone. He knew my limit, and He had already prepared a way of escape. Once I stopped trying to fight in my own power and started looking for the way out God was providing, things began to change. Sometimes the way out was as simple as walking away from a situation, calling a friend for prayer, or opening my Bible and reading truth until the temptation lost its power.

Temptation is part of being human. It comes to all of us — in our thoughts, our desires, our habits, our weaknesses. But we are never alone in the battle. God is faithful. He knows you. He knows your limits better than you do. And He has promised that He will always make a way for you to endure and come out victorious.

The key is learning to recognize the way of escape when it appears. Sometimes it's a timely Scripture that comes to mind. Sometimes it's a friend who calls at just the right moment. Sometimes it's simply the strength to say “no” one more time. But the way out is always there.

Group Discussion

1. What is one area where you commonly face temptation? For example, it could be anger, lust, worry, gossip, overeating, losing your temper, or anything else that pulls at you repeatedly.
2. When you're tempted, what usually happens in your mind or heart? Do you try to fight it on your own, give in quickly, ignore it, feel guilty, or maybe try to justify it?
3. Looking back, can you think of a time when God provided a way of escape during a temptation? What did that look like? And what's one practical way you can get better at recognizing and taking the way out God provides the next time temptation comes?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read 1 Corinthians 10:13 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What is one area where I am currently facing temptation?

Have I been trying to fight it in my own strength, or have I been looking for the way of escape God provides?

What is one practical “way out” I can prepare for or use the next time this temptation comes?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a short prayer asking God for strength and for eyes to see the way of escape He provides.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that we are not alone in our struggles. Thank You that You are faithful and that You always provide a way out when we are tempted. Help us recognize temptation quickly, turn to You immediately, and choose to take the way of escape You provide. Strengthen us to walk in victory instead of defeat. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

James 4:7 – *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

Psalms 119:11 – *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”*

1 Corinthians 10:13 – *“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”*
(Main verse repeated for emphasis)

Hebrews 2:18 – *“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*

Lesson 6: Overcoming Fear



Based on 2 Timothy 1:7, it declares that fear does not come from God and shows how to replace it with His power, love, and sound mind.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Many of us battle fear in different areas of our lives. Some of us are afraid of the future, others of failure, sickness, or what people think of us. Help us understand tonight that fear does not come from You, and fill us with Your power, love, and a sound mind. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is 2 Timothy 1:7. It says: *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

This is one of the most liberating and powerful verses in the entire Bible. God is being very direct with us. He wants us to know clearly that fear does not come from Him. Fear is a spirit, but it is not His spirit. Instead, He has given us three powerful gifts to replace fear: His power, His love, and a sound mind.

I remember a season in my life when fear had a very strong grip on me. After going through several major losses, I became afraid of almost everything. I was afraid of more bad news, afraid of getting sick again, afraid that the future would only bring more pain. My mind would race at night with “what if” thoughts that wouldn’t stop. The more I tried to push the fear away, the stronger it became. I felt paralyzed and exhausted.

Then I began to meditate on this verse every day. I would say it out loud: “God has not given me a spirit of fear. He has given me power, love, and a sound mind.” At first it felt like just words, but over time those words started sinking deeper into my heart. I realized I had been accepting fear as if it were normal and inevitable. But God was telling me it wasn’t from Him.

Fear is a liar. It exaggerates danger. It tells us the worst is going to happen. It tells us we’re not strong enough, not safe enough, not loved enough. But God’s Word tells us the truth. He has equipped us with everything we need. His power is greater than any situation we face. His perfect love casts out fear. And His sound mind gives us clarity and peace instead of panic and confusion.

This verse is not just a nice saying to make us feel better. It is a declaration of who we really are in Christ. We are not meant to live under the heavy cloud of fear. We are called to walk in power, love, and clarity. Every time fear tries to rise up, we have the right to reject it and choose God’s truth instead.

Group Discussion

1. What is one thing you’re currently afraid of? It could be fear of the future, fear of failure, fear of getting sick, financial problems, losing someone you love, or fear of what others think of you.
2. How has fear been affecting your decisions or your peace lately? Has it caused you to hold back, lose sleep, make choices out of worry, or avoid certain things God might be calling you to do?
3. What would it look like in your daily life to replace fear with the power, love, and sound mind God has given you? What’s one practical change you could make this week?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read 2 Timothy 1:7 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What fear am I currently carrying that is weighing me down the most?

How has this fear been affecting my life, my decisions, or my peace?

What would my life look like if I truly replaced this fear with God's power, love, and sound mind?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a prayer surrendering your fear to God and asking Him to fill you with His power, love, and sound mind.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You that fear does not come from You. Thank You that You have given us power, love, and a sound mind. Help us reject the spirit of fear and walk in the courage and freedom You have provided. Fill us with Your peace and confidence every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

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.”*

Psalms 56:3 – *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”*

2 Timothy 1:7 – *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* (Main verse)

Psalms 34:4 – *“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”*

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.”*

Lesson 7: Forgiving Others



From Colossians 3:13, it explains why we must forgive as the Lord forgave us and how unforgiveness hurts us more than the offender.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Many of us carry hurts and grievances from the past. As we open Your Word, give us soft hearts and the strength to forgive as You have forgiven us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is Colossians 3:13. It says: *"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."*

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

This verse is very clear and very challenging. We are called to forgive others the same way God has forgiven us — completely, freely, and without holding onto the offense. Unforgiveness is one of the heaviest burdens a person can carry. It often hurts us far more than the person who hurt us.

I know this from personal experience. There was a time when someone I trusted deeply betrayed me. The pain was intense, and for a long time I replayed the hurt over and over in my mind. Every time I thought about it, the anger and bitterness grew stronger. I told myself I had a right to be angry. But the longer I held onto that unforgiveness, the more it poisoned my heart and affected my peace, my sleep, and even my relationships with other people.

Then I really started meditating on this verse. God wasn't asking me to pretend the hurt didn't happen. He wasn't telling me to trust the person again right away. He was asking me to release the debt the same way He had released my own sins against Him. That was a hard truth to swallow. But when I finally made the choice to forgive — even though I didn't feel like it at first — something powerful happened. The heavy weight I had been carrying for months began to lift. The bitterness slowly lost its grip on my heart.

Forgiveness is rarely easy. It doesn't always mean the relationship is immediately restored, and it doesn't erase the memory of what happened. But it does release us from the prison of bitterness. When we forgive as the Lord forgave us, we are choosing to stop punishing the other person in our heart and trusting God with the justice.

Unforgiveness gives the enemy a foothold in our lives. It steals our joy, damages our relationships, and can even affect our physical health. But forgiveness sets us free. It allows God's peace to flow back into our hearts. It opens the door for healing.

If you're carrying unforgiveness right now — toward a spouse, a parent, a child, a friend, or anyone who has hurt you — this verse is speaking directly to you. God knows how deep the wound is. He knows how justified your anger feels. But He also knows the freedom that comes when we choose to forgive.

Group Discussion

1. Is there someone you're still struggling to forgive? What happened?
2. What makes forgiving that person so difficult for you? Is it the depth of the hurt, fear that they'll hurt you again, the feeling that they don't deserve forgiveness, or something else?
3. What would it look like for you to forgive them the same way the Lord has forgiven you? What might be the first small step you could take this week?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Colossians 3:13 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Is there anyone I'm still carrying unforgiveness toward?

What is the cost of holding onto that unforgiveness in my life right now?

What would it look like for me to forgive them the same way God has forgiven me?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts. If God brings someone to mind, write their name down as a step toward releasing them. You can also write a short prayer asking God for the strength to forgive.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, give us the strength to forgive others the way You have forgiven us. Heal the deep wounds we've been carrying and free us from bitterness and resentment. Help us release the people who have hurt us and trust You with the outcome. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Matthew 6:14-15 – *“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

Ephesians 4:32 – *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

Mark 11:25 – *“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

Luke 6:37 – *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”*

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Lesson 8: Forgiving Yourself



Using 1 John 1:9, this lesson addresses the heavy burden of shame and guilt, showing that when God forgives us, we can — and must — forgive ourselves.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Many of us carry deep shame and guilt from our past. Help us receive Your complete forgiveness as we open Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is 1 John 1:9. It says: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

This is one of the most beautiful and freeing verses in the Bible. When we confess our sins, God doesn't just forgive us — He purifies us completely. He wipes the slate clean. Yet many of us have received God's forgiveness but still carry heavy shame and guilt. We beat ourselves up long after God has already let it go.

I know this struggle very well. There were things in my past — decisions I made, mistakes I made, ways I hurt people I loved — that haunted me for years. Even after I confessed them to God and knew He had forgiven me, I couldn't forgive myself. I would replay those failures over and over in my mind. The shame was so heavy that it affected how I saw myself and how I lived. I felt unworthy, like I didn't deserve God's goodness.

Then I began to really meditate on this verse. God wasn't just offering partial forgiveness. He was offering complete purification. Beating myself up after God had already forgiven me was actually refusing His grace. It was like telling God, "Your forgiveness isn't enough for me — I need to punish myself a little more."

That realization was life-changing. Forgiving myself didn't mean pretending the mistakes never happened. It meant agreeing with God that His blood was enough. It meant choosing to walk in the freedom He had already purchased for me instead of staying in the prison of self-condemnation.

Shame and self-hatred are powerful tools the enemy uses against us. They keep us stuck in the past and stop us from moving forward in the purpose God has for us. But God's forgiveness is complete. When He forgives, He doesn't hold it against us anymore. He purifies us. He makes us new.

If you are carrying guilt or shame from your past — a bad decision, a failure, an addiction, a broken relationship, or something you're deeply ashamed of — this verse is speaking directly to you. God has already forgiven you. The question is: will you receive it fully and forgive yourself?

Group Discussion

1. Is there something from your past that you still struggle to forgive yourself for? For example, a past addiction, a broken relationship, a bad decision that hurt your family, or something you're ashamed of.
2. Why do you think it's so hard to forgive yourself, even after you've confessed it to God? Is it pride, fear of repeating the same mistake, shame, feeling unworthy, or something else?
3. What would change in your life if you truly believed that God has completely forgiven you and no longer holds it against you? How would that freedom look in your daily life?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read 1 John 1:9 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What guilt or shame from my past am I still carrying?

Have I truly received God's forgiveness, or am I still punishing myself?

What would it look like for me to walk in the freedom and purity God has already given me?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts. If God brings something to mind, write it down as a step toward releasing it. You can also write a short prayer asking God to help you receive His complete forgiveness and forgive yourself.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You that Your forgiveness is complete. Thank You that when we confess our sins, You purify us from all unrighteousness. Help us stop punishing ourselves for things You've already forgiven. Heal our shame and let us walk in the freedom and purity You've given us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Isaiah 26:3-4 – *“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.”*

Psalms 56:3 – *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”*

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.”*
(Main verse repeated for emphasis)

Nahum 1:7 – *“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.”*

Lesson 9: Trusting God in Difficult Times



Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches us to trust the Lord with all our heart, stop leaning on our own understanding, and surrender every area to Him so He can direct our paths.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Life can be hard and confusing at times. Help us learn what it really means to trust You completely as we open Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is Proverbs 3:5-6. It says: “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.”

This is one of the most beloved and powerful verses in the Bible. It gives us both a clear command and a beautiful promise. God is asking us to trust Him with all our heart — not just part of it. He tells us to stop leaning on our own understanding, to stop trying to figure everything out on our own, and instead to submit every area of our life to Him. When we do that, He promises to make our paths straight.

I remember a season when this verse became very real to me. Everything in my life seemed to be falling apart at once. I was facing serious financial pressure, health concerns, and family struggles. My mind was racing day and night trying to solve all the problems. The more I tried to figure things out and fix them in my own strength, the more anxious and exhausted I became. I felt like I was drowning.

Then I started meditating on this verse. I realized I had been trusting in my own understanding far more than I was trusting God. I was trying to be in control instead of surrendering control to Him. So I began praying this verse every morning. I would tell God, “I choose to trust You with all my heart. I will not lean on my own understanding. I submit this situation to You.”

Slowly, something started to shift. The heavy burden I had been carrying began to lift. I didn’t have all the answers, but I had peace. I started to see God working in ways I never would have seen if I had kept trying to control everything myself.

Trusting God completely doesn’t mean we sit back and do nothing. It means we do what we can while trusting Him with what we can’t control. It means we stop rehearsing every worst-case scenario in our minds and start reminding ourselves that God is faithful. He sees the whole picture. He knows the end from the beginning. And He has promised to direct our paths when we submit our ways to Him.

This verse is an invitation to stop carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders. God never asked us to be God. He asks us to trust the One who is.

Group Discussion

1. What is one difficult situation you’re facing right now where you need to trust God? For example, is it a health issue, financial pressure, family problems, uncertainty about the future, or something else?
2. What makes it hard for you to fully trust God in that situation? Is it fear of what might happen, wanting to stay in control, feeling like God has forgotten you, or past disappointments?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

3. What would trusting God in this situation actually look like for you practically this week? Would it look like having more peace, stopping trying to fix it yourself, choosing to pray instead of worrying, or taking one small step of obedience?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Proverbs 3:5-6 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What is one area in my life right now where I am leaning on my own understanding instead of trusting God?

What fears or desires for control are making it hard for me to fully surrender this situation to Him?

What would trusting God with all my heart look like practically in this situation this week?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts. You can also write a short prayer surrendering this area to God and choosing to trust Him.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, we choose to trust You with all our hearts. Help us stop leaning on our own understanding. Give us peace as we surrender every difficulty, every worry, and every situation to You. Make our paths straight as You have promised. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Hebrews 13:5 – *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”*

1 Timothy 6:6-8 – *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”*

Matthew 6:33 – *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

Psalms 37:3-4 – *“Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”*

Lesson10: Finding Contentment in a Material World



From Philippians 4:11-12, Paul's secret of contentment in prison shows that true contentment comes from Christ, not circumstances.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. In a world that constantly tells us we need more, help us discover the secret of true contentment as we open Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verse today is Philippians 4:11-12. It says: “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”

Paul wrote these words while he was in prison. He wasn’t living in comfort or abundance. Yet he had learned the secret of being content no matter what his circumstances were.

This is one of the most powerful and counter-cultural lessons in the entire Bible. We live in a world that is constantly telling us we need more — a bigger house, a nicer car, better clothes, more money, more success, more likes on social media. The message is loud and relentless: contentment comes from having the right things and the right status.

Paul says the opposite. Real contentment is not based on what we have. It is based on who we have — Jesus.

I remember a season in my life when I struggled badly with discontentment. After some major financial losses, I looked around and saw other people who seemed to have so much more. The comparison was brutal. I would feel dissatisfied with what I had and anxious about what I didn’t have. My mind was constantly focused on what was missing instead of what God had already given me. The more I compared, the more unhappy I became.

Then I started studying this verse deeply. Paul wasn’t just saying he was content because he had learned some positive thinking trick. He had learned that contentment is a choice and a skill that is developed over time by trusting God in every circumstance — whether in plenty or in need.

The secret Paul learned is this: contentment comes when we stop looking at what we don’t have and start being grateful for what we do have, and most importantly, when we remember that Jesus is enough. When Christ is our greatest treasure, the power of “I need more” begins to lose its grip on our hearts.

Contentment doesn’t mean we stop working or having goals. It means we stop letting the pursuit of more steal our joy and peace. It means we can be grateful for what God has given us today while still trusting Him for tomorrow.

This is a lesson I am still learning at 78 years old. But the more I practice it, the more freedom I find.

Group Discussion

1. In what area of your life do you struggle most with contentment? For example — money, your home, your job, your appearance, your marriage, your children’s success, or comparing yourself to what others have on social media or in real life?
2. What usually triggers feelings of “I need more” or “I’m not enough”? Is it seeing other people’s highlight reels on social media, certain situations, conversations with friends, or something else? How does that trigger make you feel?
3. What would it look like for you to practice contentment this week? Would it mean stopping certain habits like comparison or scrolling, being more intentional about thankfulness every day, or trusting God more deeply with your needs and desires?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Philippians 4:11-12 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

In what area of my life am I struggling most with discontentment right now?

What is driving that feeling of “I need more”?

What would it look like for me to choose contentment this week and trust that God is enough?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a prayer asking God to teach you the secret of contentment like He taught Paul.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, teach us to be content like Paul was. Help us stop comparing ourselves to others and start trusting that You are enough for us. Give us grateful hearts and peace in every circumstance. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Jeremiah 29:12 – “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

Philippians 4:6 – *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

James 5:16 – *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – *“Pray continually.”*

Lesson 11: The Power of Prayer



Matthew 6:9-13 (the Lord's Prayer) gives us Jesus' model for powerful prayer — worship, surrender, dependence, forgiveness, and protection.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Prayer is one of the greatest privileges and most powerful gifts You have given us. As we study how Jesus taught us to pray, open our hearts, deepen our relationship with You, and help us learn to pray with greater faith and intimacy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verses today are Matthew 6:9-13. Jesus says: “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

Jesus didn’t just command us to pray — He sat down and showed us exactly how. The Lord’s Prayer is not a rigid script we must repeat word for word. It is a perfect model that teaches us the heart, the priorities, and the attitude we should have when we come to God.

I remember a long season when my prayer life was shallow and inconsistent. I would pray mostly when things were hard — asking for help, complaining, or begging God to fix my problems. My prayers were self-centered and rushed. Then I began to study the Lord’s Prayer more carefully, and it completely changed how I approached God.

Jesus starts with worship and relationship: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.” He teaches us to begin by remembering who God is — our loving Father — and honoring Him. Before asking for anything, we align our hearts with His.

Then comes surrender: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This is powerful. Before we bring our own requests, we submit our will to God’s will. This is where real transformation begins.

Next, Jesus teaches us dependence: “Give us today our daily bread.” We are invited to bring our everyday needs to our Father. He cares about the small things as well as the big ones.

Then comes forgiveness: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Unforgiveness blocks our prayers. God calls us to keep short accounts.

Finally, protection: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” We acknowledge our weakness and ask God to guard us.

This model covers everything we need in prayer — worship, surrender, dependence, forgiveness, and protection. When we pray this way, our relationship with God grows deeper, our faith becomes stronger, and we experience more of His peace and power in daily life.

Prayer is not a religious duty. It is a relationship with our Father. The more we pray according to this pattern Jesus gave us, the more we will experience the reality of God in our lives.

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Group Discussion

1. Which part of the Lord's Prayer stands out to you the most right now, and why?
2. Which part of prayer do you struggle with the most — beginning with worship, surrendering to God's will, bringing your daily needs, forgiving others, or asking for protection from temptation and evil?
3. Looking at your own prayer life, what's one practical change you can make this week to make your prayers more like the model Jesus gave us? For example, could you start your prayers with worship, set aside a consistent time each day, be more specific with your requests, or be more intentional about forgiveness?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) once more, out loud if possible. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

Which part of this prayer speaks most strongly to my life right now?

In which area of prayer do I need the most growth?

What is one practical step I can take this week to improve and deepen my prayer life?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a short prayer to God, using the structure Jesus taught us.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for teaching us how to pray through Your Son Jesus. Help us develop a deeper, more consistent, and more intimate prayer life. May our prayers be filled with worship, surrender, dependence, forgiveness, and trust in Your protection. Draw us closer to You every time we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

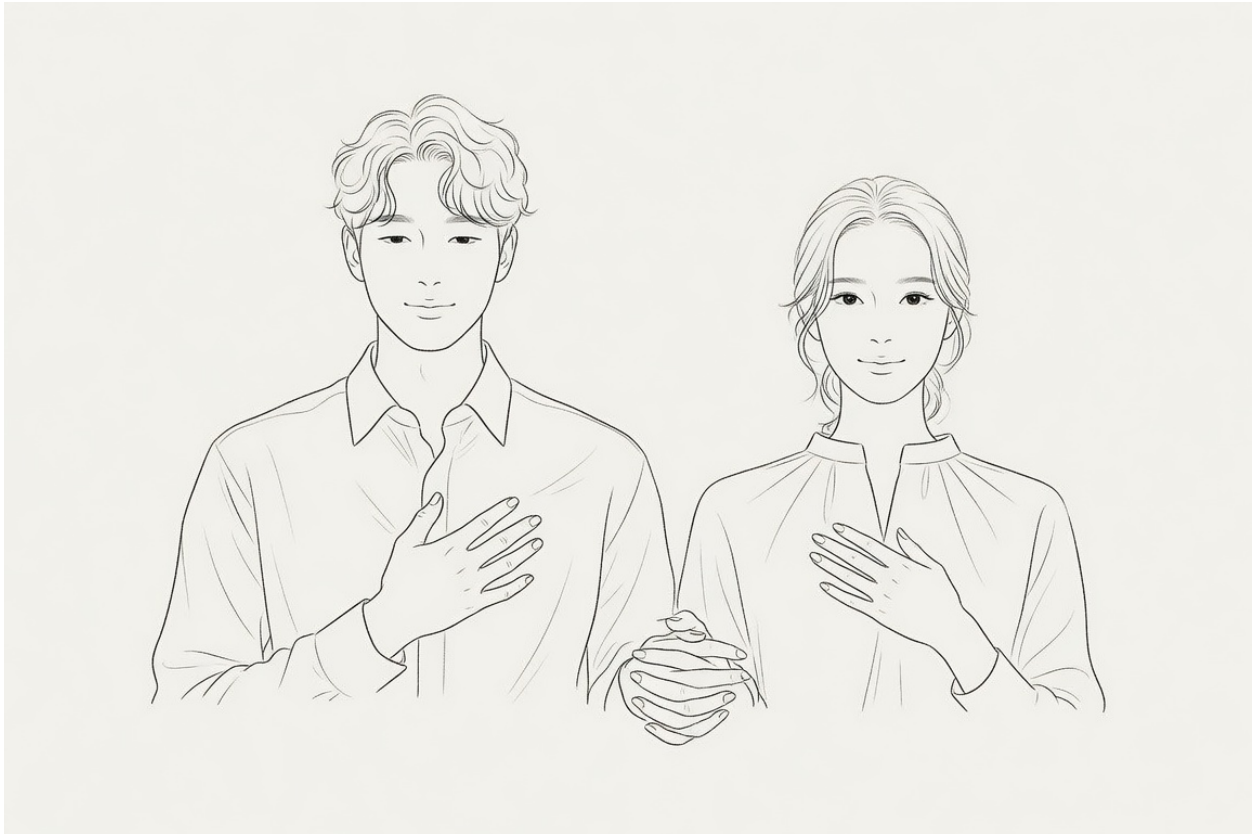
Genesis 2:18 – *“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” (Main verse repeated for emphasis)*

Malachi 2:14-15 – *“...the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth... Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit.”*

Matthew 19:6 – *“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”*

Ephesians 5:31 – *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”*

Lesson 12: God's Design for Marriage



Genesis 2:18 and 2:24 reveals God's original plan for marriage as a lifelong covenant where two become one.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Marriage is one of Your greatest gifts, but it can also be one of the most challenging areas of life. Help us understand Your perfect design for marriage and give us the wisdom, grace, and love to honor it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verses today are Genesis 2:18 and 2:24. It says: “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” And “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

From the very beginning of creation, before sin ever entered the world, God looked at Adam and declared something profound: “It is not good for the man to be alone.” Of all the things God created, marriage was the first relationship He intentionally designed. He created woman from man’s side and brought her to him. This was not an afterthought. It was part of God’s perfect plan for humanity.

God designed marriage to be a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. When they come together, they leave their parents and form a new family unit. They become “one flesh.” This is far more than physical intimacy. It means sharing life at the deepest level — emotionally, spiritually, financially, and in everyday decisions. Two people becoming one in purpose, in love, and in commitment.

I’ve been married long enough to know that marriage is both incredibly beautiful and very challenging. It has a way of revealing our selfishness, our differences, and our weaknesses like nothing else can. But it also has the power to refine us, teach us unconditional love, forgiveness, and patience, and show us a living picture of how Christ loves the church.

In our culture today, marriage is often treated very lightly. People live together without commitment, walk away when things get hard, or try to redefine it to fit their own preferences. But God’s design has never changed. He created marriage as a sacred covenant, not a disposable contract. When we honor His design, we experience the blessing, protection, and joy that come from living according to His plan.

Marriage is not primarily about our personal happiness. It is about reflecting God’s faithful, covenant love to a watching world. When a husband loves his wife sacrificially the way Christ loves the church, and a wife respects and supports her husband, they paint a powerful picture of the gospel for their children and everyone around them.

Group Discussion

1. What did you learn or observe about marriage while you were growing up that still affects how you view it today? Was it positive, negative, or mixed?
2. Why do you think God said it is not good for man to be alone? What does that tell us about the purpose and importance of marriage in God’s eyes?
3. What’s one area in marriage — whether you’re currently married or thinking about it for the future — where you need God’s help to do it His way instead of following the world’s way? What would that look like practically?

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Genesis 2:18 and 2:24 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

What has shaped my view of marriage the most — my parents, culture, past experiences, or God's Word?

In what ways am I (or would I like to be) honoring God's design for marriage?

What is one area where I need God's help to build or strengthen a godly marriage?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a short prayer asking God to help you understand and live out His design for marriage.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for the gift of marriage. Help us understand and honor Your perfect design for it. Give us wisdom, grace, patience, and love to build marriages that reflect Your covenant love. Heal any broken places and strengthen what is good. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Genesis 2:18 – *“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” (Main verse repeated for emphasis)*

Genesis 2:24 – *“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” (Main verse repeated for emphasis)*

Mark 10:6-9 – *“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 – *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”*

Lesson 13: Love, Respect, and Communication in Marriage



Drawing from Ephesians 5:33 and 4:15, this lesson explores how meeting the needs for love and respect, combined with speaking the truth in love, builds strong, godly marriages.

Fellowship Time

Welcome everyone to the group. If there are any new people, take a moment and go around the room (or on the screen) and have each person give their name and share one thing they're looking forward to in this study.

Then take a few minutes and let each person share one good thing that happened this past week, or one thing they are thankful for. This is a great way to begin building real fellowship together.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. Marriage is one of Your greatest gifts, but it can also be one of the most challenging. Help us understand how to love, respect, and communicate with each other the way You designed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Core Teaching Time

Our main verses today are Ephesians 5:33 and Ephesians 4:15. Ephesians 5:33 says: "However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." And Ephesians 4:15 says: "Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

God created men and women with different primary needs in marriage. Husbands have a deep need for respect, while wives have a deep need to feel loved. When these needs are met, marriages thrive. When they are not, conflict usually follows. Healthy communication — speaking the truth in love — is the lifeline that keeps love and respect flowing between them.

I've been married long enough to see how true this is. Early in our marriage, I would often speak bluntly when I was tired or frustrated, thinking I was just being honest. I didn't realize how much those words hurt my wife's need to feel loved. At the same time, when she was stressed, her tone sometimes made me feel disrespected. Small disagreements quickly turned into bigger arguments, and we both felt hurt without fully understanding why.

Once we learned God's design, things began to change. I became intentional about speaking words of love and appreciation. She made a conscious effort to show respect, even in small things. We also worked on speaking the truth in love instead of attacking each other or shutting down. The atmosphere in our home grew warmer and more peaceful. Those small, daily choices added up over the years and strengthened our marriage.

Love and respect are not about demanding from our spouse. They are about choosing to give what the other person needs most, even when we don't feel like it. It is about serving one another the way Christ serves us. Communication is what makes this possible. Truth without love wounds. Love without truth allows problems to grow. But when we speak the truth in love — with kindness, patience, and a desire to understand — we build trust, intimacy, and strength.

Marriage is not primarily about our personal happiness. It is about reflecting God's faithful covenant love to a watching world. When a husband loves his wife sacrificially the way Christ loves the church, and a wife respects and supports her husband, and both communicate with honesty and kindness, they paint a powerful picture of the gospel for their children and everyone around them.

Group Discussion

1. Which is harder for you personally — showing love, showing respect, or communicating honestly with kindness? Why do you think that is?
2. Can you think of a recent situation in your marriage (or in your parents' marriage) where better love, respect, or communication could have changed the outcome? What happened and how did it affect the relationship?
3. What is one practical way you can show love or respect this week while also improving how you communicate, especially during tension or conflict? Be as specific as possible.

Personal Reflection & Application

Take several minutes of quiet time with the Lord. Slowly read Ephesians 5:33 and 4:15 once more. Then prayerfully consider these questions:

In what ways am I doing well at showing love, respect, or speaking the truth in love?

Where do I need the most growth in these areas?

What is one specific, practical step I can take this week to better meet my spouse's needs through love, respect, and communication?

Finding Peace in Difficult Times

Use the space below to write out your honest thoughts and a short prayer asking God to help you love, respect, and communicate as He designed.

[illegible]

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for the gift of marriage. Help us to love and respect each other the way You designed. Teach us to speak the truth in love, remove selfishness and fear from our hearts and our words, and build marriages that reflect Your covenant faithfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Refreshments and Fellowship

This is a valuable time to enjoy refreshments together and build friendships. Use this time to relax, talk about life, and get to know one another better. Feel free to continue discussing the lesson and share what it meant to you personally, but there is no pressure to do so. The goal is simply to enjoy each other's company and strengthen the relationships in the group.

Additional Reading

Ephesians 5:25 – *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”*

Colossians 3:19 – *“Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”*

1 Peter 3:7 – *“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life...”*

Proverbs 15:1 – *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

James 1:19 – *“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”*

Following God's Command

You've now gone through all thirteen lessons. My hope is that God has spoken to your heart and that you've experienced His love and peace in a fresh way.

Before we finish, I want to leave you with Jesus' own words. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus gave us this clear command:

"Go and make disciples of all nations..."

This is not just a suggestion — it is a command.

Now that you've been through this study, you have everything you need to help others. You don't have to be a pastor or a Bible expert. You simply need a willing heart and this book in your hands.

Here's how you can begin:

- Pray and ask God to show you who He wants you to invite.
- Reach out to friends, family members, coworkers, or neighbors. Be honest and warm with your invitation.
- You can say something as simple as: "I just finished a study that really helped me. I'd love to go through it with you and a few others. Would you be interested in joining me?"

You don't need a big group. Sometimes the most powerful groups start with just three or four people sitting around a kitchen table. What matters most is that you create a safe place where people can be honest, share their struggles, and grow in God's Word together.

Take this book, gather a few people who need hope, and begin. God will meet you there.

The same love and peace you've received — it's now your turn to pass it on.

Go and make disciples.