

THE
JOURNEY

BECOMING
MORE LIKE
JESUS

PARTICIPANT'S
GUIDE

UNIT THREE
TO TRUST HIM



THE JOURNEY



DEAR FELLOW TRAVELER,

Welcome to The Journey. We are so glad you are here. We believe that discipleship is a journey of becoming more like Jesus, and we want to come alongside you on this adventure. Perhaps you are new to following Jesus. Or maybe you've been following Him for many years. Regardless of your place on the path, we believe The Journey is for you.

The Journey is a versatile resource designed with the church and home in mind. The content will contain foundational, biblical teaching presented in an interactive format. It's intended for use in community with other believers. We also have built At-Home Exercises into the content for you to engage in at home throughout the week. We hope that these exercises help to strengthen your understanding of Jesus and hold you accountable for meeting with Jesus daily.

Our lives are radically changed by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit through salvation, but our journey with the Lord shouldn't stop at our salvation experience. We must then embark on a journey of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. By digging deeper into this relationship, The Journey will help you extend discipleship beyond Sundays. By immersing yourself into God's Word, prayer, and worship, you will fall more in love with the One who loves you most. Remember, there is always more to learn, still room to grow, and always support available for you on the journey.

We have been praying for you. We have had you in mind as we have been preparing this study. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit would work mightily in your life as you commit to this personal and communal discipleship journey with the Lord.

With you on The Journey,

YOUR DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES FAMILY

THE JOURNEY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIT THREE: TO TRUST HIM

1. What Does It Mean to Trust God?
2. How Do We Know We Can Trust Jesus?
3. Remembering: Memory and Trust
4. Trusting in Suffering and Pain
5. Selfishness and Surrendering
6. Trust Misplaced
7. Trust Wounds
8. Trust in the Future



THE JOURNEY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT BIBLE TRANSLATION ARE YOU USING?

All scriptures used in The Journey will be the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

HOW IS THE JOURNEY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER BIBLE STUDIES?

The Journey is an invitation to say yes to Jesus in every part of your life. Centered around weekly class experiences, the focus of The Journey is on the 6 days you aren't with your group. We want you to grow in knowledge, as all Bible studies do, but we also want you to be transformed by the power of God and become more like Jesus. By connecting, growing in knowledge, daily intimacy with Jesus, and participation in community, we hope that you will experience transformation.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH DISCUSSION?

We believe that discussion with one another is a vital part of learning. It teaches us to think critically about what we are hearing, to be dependent on one another (someone else may have an insight that we need to hear), and to build trust and relationships in the group.

DOES THIS WORK FOR SMALL AND LARGE GROUPS?

Yes! We believe that the flexibility of this resource allows it to function in both settings. It can be easily adapted to fit the needs of any sized group!

THE JOURNEY

LESSON ONE | WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TRUST GOD?

It is impossible to trust fully what you do not know. As we continue our Journey toward becoming more like Jesus, trust is a natural development of our knowing and loving Him.

As we come to know and love Jesus, He demonstrates His faithfulness to hear and respond to our cries of help, need, and desperation.

Trust-building is an on-going process. It begins with our saying yes to Jesus, and it will continue throughout our lives with Him.

I. TRUSTING GOD IS AN ACT OF SUBMISSION

Read: Luke 22:41-44

TALK ABOUT IT

Jesus knew what was coming, yet He still prayed, "Not my will, but Yours be done." What does Jesus' act of trust and submission to the Father teach us about trust?

THINK ABOUT IT

Trust is not passive. It is the action of belief. Jesus shows us in Luke 22 that His trust was the fruit of His deep love for, His relationship with, and His faith in the Father.

Trust is a posture of reliance, and the Bible teaches us that in our reliance, we become the fullest versions of ourselves. This kind of trust does not happen overnight.

The Gospel accounts often refer to Jesus

withdrawing from the disciples to pray (Mk 1:35, 6:46; Lk 6:12, 9:18, 11:1, 22:41-44).

II. TRUSTING JESUS AND NOT MYSELF

Read: John 15:5; Proverbs 3:5-6

TALK ABOUT IT

How does Jesus' statement, "Without Me, you can do nothing," play a role in your life? Is this statement easier said than lived? What does it mean to "trust in the Lord with all your heart?"

THINK ABOUT IT

What are some ways we demonstrate a lack of trust in Jesus in our daily lives?

Jesus taught the disciples (and us) to pray for "our daily bread."

Trusting God to provide daily bread is to ask Him to oversee our basic needs, even the trivial things in our lives.

Who is sufficient for every one of life's challenges? Jesus is. Not me.

III. TRUSTING LIKE A CHILD

Read: Matthew 18:1-5

TALK ABOUT IT

What is it about the humility of a child that caused Jesus to say they "are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"



THINK ABOUT IT

To trust Jesus with the humility of a child is to surrender ourselves to Him in full reliance with no thought to our advancement, recognition, or title.

Our temptation is to see relationships, including our relationship with Jesus, on a value scale.

Jesus is not a means to an end. Our advancement, our vision, and our goals are not the main purpose for our existence.

CALL TO ACTION

Commit to participating in The Journey the next eight weeks to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18) Be sure to fill out your commitment form for this eight-week unit.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Explain what it means to you to trust God.
- 2) What is the difference between passive trust and active trust?
- 3) Give an example of how you had to choose to trust God in a situation rather than leaning on your own understanding.
- 4) If you lived every moment fully aware of your trust in Jesus, what would your life look like?

AT- HOME SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 18:1-27

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study this week's At-Home Scriptures. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God.

Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.

2) Throughout the Gospel accounts, they refer to Jesus withdrawing from the disciples to pray (Mk 1:35, 6:46; Lk 6:12, 9:18, 11:1, 22:41-44). Jesus shows us a way of living that finds strength in withdrawing from busyness to be with God. This week, try to say no to one activity each day. Instead, spend that time alone with Jesus. You choose how to spend the time.

3) Spending time with God, and people who know Him well, will help to increase our trust in Him. Hearing stories of God's faithfulness is encouraging. Ask a friend, a parent, a mentor, or a spouse if they have stories of God's faithfulness that they can share with you. Don't be afraid to share your own stories with them.

4) This week, share with others some of the things God has been teaching you in The Journey. This kind of personal sharing is always helpful. Don't worry about it being wise or intellectual. Simply share what God is doing in your life and watch others warm up to the good news.



THE JOURNEY

LESSON TWO | HOW DO WE KNOW WE CAN TRUST JESUS?

One of the secrets of the Church is the doubt believers experience. Doubt itself is not sinful, and it can be a catalyst to new spiritual growth.

Having established early in The Journey who Jesus is, why He came, and what it means to trust Him, this lesson will examine the evidence for trusting Christ, answering the question, "How Do We Know We Can Trust Jesus?"

I. AN IMPERFECT FAITH

Read: Mark 9:14-24

TALK ABOUT IT

Which of the three types of doubt have you wrestled with most: intellectual, spiritual, or circumstantial? Explain your response.

THINK ABOUT IT

Many people think doubt is the opposite of faith, but it is not. Unbelief is the opposite of faith.

Unbelief is a refusal to believe, while doubt refers to inner uncertainty.

Many people also think doubt is unforgivable, but it is not that either. God does not condemn us when we question him.

II. A PERFECT SAVIOR

Read: Mark 9:25-27

TALK ABOUT IT

The focus of my faith is more important than the quantity of my faith. You can have an imperfect faith if its object is a perfect Savior. Is Jesus a perfect Savior? How do we know we can trust Him?

THINK ABOUT IT

We must be ready to give a reason for our trust in Jesus. Some of those reasons include the following:

- Prophecies about Jesus
- Resurrection of Jesus
- Faithfulness of Jesus

We know we can trust Jesus because even "if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13).

III. AN HONEST PRAYER

Read: Mark 9:24

THINK ABOUT IT

It is easy to look down on the poor, tired father who saw no hope for his tormented son, but he deserves our respect. The words, "Help my unbelief," expose his inner turbulence.

Jesus compassionately responded to his vulnerability, even as He does today with all who will dare to pray, "Lord, I believe; help me with my doubts."

Has there ever been a time in your spiritual walk when you honestly prayed this prayer? How did Jesus answer you?



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) We all experience seasons of uncertainty or doubt. Talk about a time you were faced with doubt.
- 2) How do you think doubt can lead to a stronger spiritual foundation?
- 3) What has helped you most during the times you've cried out, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief"?
- 4) How would it change things if you saw your doubts as opportunities to learn and grow deeper in relationship with Christ, instead of a reason for unease?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURE:

Mark 9:14-29

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study Mark 9:14-29. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.
- 2) Intentionally reach out to a friend this week, ask how they are, and then wait to hear the answer. Listen with a caring heart, attentive mind, and loving attitude. Be ready to share your testimony of how your honest prayer asking Jesus to help you with your doubts has served to strengthen your faith, knowing we can trust Jesus.
- 3) Purposefully offer thanksgiving as an act of worship. Mike Coleman, the founder of Integrity Music, encourages believers to take a "30-minute Thanksgiving Break" in which you give thanks to the Lord for a half-hour. Be careful not to request anything, only "count your blessings."

4) Memorized information fills our minds: birthdates, phone numbers, addresses, sports stats, tv quotes, etc. But are they also filled with God's Word? Scripture Memorization is a spiritually-grounding discipline. Being able to bring scripture back to our minds provides strength and comfort when we need it most. This week, choose a passage that reminds you that Jesus is trustworthy.



THE JOURNEY

LESSON THREE | REMEMBERING: MEMORY AND TRUST

The book of Psalms offers some of the most specific instructions for adults to use when teaching their children the reasons for their faith.

Whereas the majority of the Psalms are addressed to God, Psalm 78 speaks to the congregation to remind them of the stories they have learned. Readers are encouraged to remember past events and the consequences of sin and rebellion.

I. CONSEQUENCES OF FORGETTING

Read: Judges 2:6-15

TALK ABOUT IT

This passage, from the opening of Judges, is a brief explanation for the tragic stories detailed later in the book. An entire generation forgot (or didn't know) to remember God's goodness and provision. Why is teaching the next generation important? What is at stake for failing to do our part?

THINK ABOUT IT

The book of Judges describes the generation of Israelites who lived after the conquest of the Promised Land.

Judges 2 recounts how this generation forgot what God had done for them in the past.

Lack of spiritual leadership and commitment to teaching children about God's faithfulness results in a downward spiral into idolatry and

immorality.

II. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REMEMBERING?

Read: Psalm 78:1-8

TALK ABOUT IT

It is interesting that the writer specifies, "I will utter dark sayings" (v. 2), and goes on to say, "we will not hide them from our children." Notice the focus on retelling the testimony of how God has moved. Why is telling our testimony important? What is likely to change in our children when they know how God has moved previously?

THINK ABOUT IT

The context of the words in this psalm suggests that its teaching should be told repeatedly to each successive generation, similar to the instructions given in the Pentateuch.

The focus here is clearly on the family as those responsible for teaching their children about their own faith.

In contrast to Israel's unfaithfulness, God's attributes of graciousness, patience, and reliability are highlighted.



III. WHAT IS REMEMBERING?

TALK ABOUT IT

How does hardship shape us, and how does hardship either build or break us? What do you think impacts the difference between these two outcomes? How are our identities influenced by our parents and our own personal choices?

THINK ABOUT IT

The basis of the relationship between God and His people is established by an understanding of who He is through the accounts of how He interacts with people.

Action, rather than emotion, is the basis of faith.

How we live is determined largely by how we respond to what God has done.

Knowledge and faith are developed by experience and transferred through testimony.

IV. HOW DO WE REMEMBER TO REMEMBER?

TALK ABOUT IT

How should we remember the past? What impact do memorials and monuments have on the way we think about history? How can this be incorporated into how we remember biblical stories and personal miracles we've witnessed?

THINK ABOUT IT

The Old Testament reveals a striking pattern of how Israel taught, and the systems they established to help ensure their stories would be passed from one generation to the next.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

1) How are memories powerful in your life?

2) Why is teaching the next generation important?

3) Why do you think, by default, most of us are passive and look to others to teach our children?

4) What parts of God's action in history should we remember today?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Judges 2:6-16; Psalm 78

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Find something in your normal routine that reminds you of your commitment to God. One example is when you are hungry. Let that be an opportunity to thank God for providing for you or as a reminder to ask God to increase your spiritual hunger.

2) Think of something powerful God has done for you. Find an object or item that is a reminder of this event. This can be anything that is significant to you. Set this some place as a reminder of that moment when God moved on your behalf. When you see it, take the opportunity to thank God for bringing you through that moment.

3) Use family meals or car rides as a time when you share what God is doing in your life. As a place to start, maybe you establish Thursdays as "Thankful Thursday" where one person shares something they saw or felt God doing, either personally or for someone else. You can then use that as a conversation starter on God's faithfulness or character.

4) Go for a walk and use that time to reflect on what God has done for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of what God has brought you through and to open your eyes to God's daily provision.



THE JOURNEY

LESSON FOUR | TRUSTING IN SUFFERING AND PAIN

Many people live by the belief that as long as you do what is expected, you will continue to earn trust.

Sadly, many times, we apply this premise to Christ. "I'll trust you as long you keep doing what I expect of you."

Because of their pain, Martha and John had to learn to trust Jesus in a more profound capacity.

It can be easy to trust when all is well, but trusting amid pain and suffering is a different story.

I. JESUS SEES OUR STRUGGLE

Read: Mark 6:47-48

TALK ABOUT IT

Why is it hard to trust when you can't see? Share about a time when you had to trust even though you couldn't see God at work.

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus saw the disciples straining against the wind.

Pain and suffering are similar to the disciples' experience in that storm. No matter how much we try to move forward, at some point, we will find ourselves stuck in suffering.

In the pinnacle of our pain and the silence of our suffering, He reminds us that we are not alone.

II. JESUS UNDERSTANDS OUR SUFFERING

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16

TALK ABOUT IT

Do you ever feel like no one understands your pain? Is this way of thinking selfish? Why or why not?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus, the Suffering Savior, understands our pain. He understands because He has lived it.

Sympathy is the ability to feel sorrow toward someone who is facing difficulty. Empathy is a shared understanding of the experience of another.

Isaiah 53 teaches us that Jesus experienced rejection, sorrow, grief, affliction, wounds, and bruises. On the Cross, He carried not only His own pain and suffering, but He also took on and felt our sadness, our grief, our sin, our doubt, our sickness, our suffering, and our pain.

III. JESUS COMES TO OUR RESCUE

Read: Mark 6:49-50

TALK ABOUT IT

Talk about a time when you needed to be rescued. What are the characteristics of one who rescues?



THINK ABOUT IT

When Jesus approaches the disciples he says, "Be of good cheer. It is I!"

James 1:2 tells us to, "Count it all joy when you fall into many trials."

As followers of Jesus, this does not mean we will not face difficult days, but we do have a way through.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) We all experience pain and suffering. Talk about what you've learned in a season of suffering.
- 2) What does it mean to you that Jesus himself suffered?
- 3) What has been most helpful in your times of pain and struggle? How do you "sit in suffering"?
- 4) What can we actively do to meet the needs of those who are suffering?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURE:

Mark 6:30-56

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study Mark 6:30-56. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.
- 2) Forgiveness is an essential part of life with God. This week, ask yourself these questions, "Who do I need to forgive?" "How do I need to forgive myself?" Is anger keeping me from extending forgiveness?
- 3) If you are in the midst of a difficult

situation, ask Jesus to help you find joy. One moment of His joy can propel you out of darkness into His light. Ask the Lord to give you three opportunities to pray for someone going through pain and suffering. Use this lesson as a springboard to share Jesus with someone who is hurting.



THE JOURNEY

LESSON FIVE | SELFISHNESS AND SURRENDERING

Are you selfish? Of course, you are. We all are, to some degree. Not everyone is equally self-centered, but neither is anyone free of it.

Our selfishness is a master of disguise, hiding behind a thousand masks to cloak its motives. Our selfishness is a wordsmith and trained attorney, quick to defend and prosecute, persuading judge and jury on behalf of its sole client.

Insisting on our way is at the center of most interpersonal conflict and abuse of others.

I. THE REALITY OF SELFISHNESS

Read: Philippians 2:3

TALK ABOUT IT

Paul speaks of “selfish ambition” and “conceit.” How would you define these words? Are they similar in meaning? What is the correlation between these words? Where did we learn such behavior?

THINK ABOUT IT

Selfishness is the attitude of being concerned with one's own interests above the interests of others, a disposition rooted in vanity and arrogance, akin to narcissism, or an overly high opinion of oneself. Where did we get the inclination of building up ourselves while tearing down others?

Scripture abounds with examples of the selfish ways of men and women.

- Adam and Eve
- King David
- Rich young ruler

Selfishness leads to “disorder and every evil practice” (James 3:16).

II. THE REQUIREMENT OF SELFLESSNESS

Read: Philippians 2:3-4

TALK ABOUT IT

Paul's admonition seems to be, “Thou shalt be selfless.” Why do you think Paul exhorts the believers at Philippi to a life of selflessness? What attitude adjustments are necessary to promote the interests of others above one's own interests?

THINK ABOUT IT

The Church at Philippi was one of the healthiest churches planted by the Apostle Paul. His letter to the Philippian Christians was partly to thank them for their financial support (Phil 4:15-20) and somewhat to deal with problems in the church.

Combatting the sin of selfish ambition requires genuine humility. Unpretentious humility restores and grows relationships. Being humble involves having a true perspective about ourselves in relation to God.

Healthy relationships need less of “me” and



more of "you." Selflessness brings out the best in others. It builds trust in relationships.

III. THE REVELATION OF SURRENDERING

Read: Philippians 2:5-8

TALK ABOUT IT

Is humility something we do, or is it something the Holy Spirit does in us?

THINK ABOUT IT

Paul calls the Philippian believers to think and feel in a new way. The Greek verb translated as "let this mind be in you" (Phil 2:5) is not just about intellectual activity but also about one's spirit or disposition.

The Holy Spirit works in us to be more like Christ and part of the fruit, or results of that work, is gentleness or humility, the opposite of self-aggrandizement.

The fullest revelation of surrendering is the self-humiliation of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose complete trust in His heavenly Father led Him to make the ultimate sacrifice for our redemption. Fallen humans can love one another and perform acts of selflessness, although rare enough to be remarkable when it does happen. Still, the way of living one's entire life requires a surrendering that only results from trusting the Father like Jesus trusted the Father.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1) We all struggle with selfishness. How has your selfishness brought about harm for you or others?

2) Do you agree that a life of selflessness and surrendering means thinking less of "me" and more of "you"?

3) Is it realistic to expect that Christians should be selfless people in a diverse, multi-cultural society?

4) How would you describe surrender? How does that help you to live out "less of me, more of Him"?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURE:

Philippians 2:1-18

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study Philippians 2:1-18. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.

2) Selflessness brings out the best in others. Think of three ways that you can actively practice putting others before yourself. During this week, put these acts of selflessness to work. Was it difficult to stop focusing on yourself? What did you learn?

3) Selfishness is part of the human experience going back to the Garden of Eden. We are all selfish. In what parts of your life are you most selfish? Once we can identify our selfishness, we then need to learn ways to have an "attitude adjustment." What are some ways that you can adjust your attitude to that of Christ Jesus?



THE JOURNEY

LESSON SIX | TRUST MISPLACED

Trust is one of the most overused words in everyday language. Scripture clearly declares we are to place our trust in God alone. Placing trust in anything other than in God becomes misplaced trust, and misplaced trust is idolatry, which leads to disaster.

Trust is defined as “assured reliance the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.” God is the only One who lives up to this standard.

I. WHAT WENT WRONG?

Read: Genesis 3:1-7

TALK ABOUT IT

How did the serpent tempt Eve? How does this text represent misplaced trust? What is the result of Adam and Eve's sin?

THINK ABOUT IT

Misplaced trust began in the Garden of Eden with the serpent's crafty question posed in a way to cast doubt on God, His Word, and His goodness.

Eve did more than misquote God. By succumbing to the serpent's deception, she doubted the essence of who God is.

Satan took the focus off what God freely and generously gave Adam and Eve.

Through deception and temptation, Satan targets our knowledge of and trust in God.

In one sense, we have never left the Garden.

We are faced with the same choice today as Adam and Eve: Do I choose to trust in God—His way—or do I doubt Him?

II. WHAT ARE YOU LEANING ON?

Read: Proverbs 3:5-6

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you see as the danger of leaning on your own understanding? What is the benefit of leaning on God?

THINK ABOUT IT

It matters what you lean on. Can you imagine leaning on yourself? Here's the choice: We can fall on the ground by leaning on something that will never hold us secure, or we can willingly and totally surrender face down to God, the only trustworthy source.

The admonition to not trust in our own understanding does not mean we check our brains at the door, or ignore common sense, or fail to seek wise counsel.

There are many areas where we can misplace our trust:

- Military Strength: Ps. 20:7; Ps. 44:6-7a
- Riches: 1 Tim. 6:17
- People/Leaders: Ps. 118:8-9

It is important to differentiate between a “provisional” trust in people and the “ultimate” trust in God. Even at our best, we can fail people, disappoint them. God is the only one who is completely trustworthy.



III. WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

Read: John 2:23-25

TALK ABOUT IT

What stands out to you about John 2:23-25?

What surprises you?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus is not surprised by humanity's failures. He certainly wasn't shocked by Adam and Eve's sin, nor did it stop Him from loving them, and us.

When it comes to the dilemma of people who have let us down, disappointed us, failed us, we can do what Jesus did: love and forgive.

An astounding truth is that even though Jesus did not entrust Himself to any human, He graciously entrusted His redeemed ones with the gospel message.

Knowing well that we carry the treasure of the gospel in the fragile clay jars of humanity—cracked and broken—He still gave us the great privilege of making Him known to the world.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) What people, things, or ideas are easy for you to trust?
- 2) Have you placed your trust in something or someone that failed you? Talk about it.
- 3) How does placing trust in Jesus lighten your load?
- 4) Jesus isn't surprised by our failure or sin. He doesn't stop loving us. How can we extend that same love to those who break our trust?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Psalms 20 & 56

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study this week's At-Home Scriptures: Psalms 20 & 56. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.

2) Pray over the areas of misplaced trust in your life. Let the Holy Spirit guide you to reveal any area where you have placed your trust in anything or anyone other than God. Make each area a point of repentance.

3) Meditate daily on the truth of this verse. Try to memorize it by the end of the week. "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:3-4).

4) "Through deception and temptation, Satan targets our knowledge of and trust in God... We are faced with the same choice today as Adam and Eve: Do I choose to trust in God—His way—or do I doubt Him?" Don't answer this question lightly. Spend some time thinking about your response. After you have finished, write your reflections down. If you feel comfortable, share your experience with another member of your Journey group.



THE JOURNEY

LESSON SEVEN | TRUST WOUNDS

Many people have suffered from old “trust wounds” for years because they are unwilling to commit to a real cure. Some have experienced betrayal, rejection, trauma, or some type of abuse early in life, and the hurts resulting from these things are understandable. The problem comes when people are unwilling to accept or pursue the real cure for these wounds. Matthew 18 provides the nuts and bolts for dealing with this subject.

I. WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Read: Matthew 18:1-9

TALK ABOUT IT

Why did the disciples ask Jesus who was the greatest? Who are the “little ones” to whom He referred?

THINK ABOUT IT

Peter, James, and John may have thought they were more important than the other disciples because they were a part of Jesus’ “inner circle.” Instead of preaching a sermon on the subject, Jesus used a child to teach a lesson on humility.

At the root of most offenses is a lack of humility. Jesus used this child to illustrate that there are no elite individuals in His kingdom. The little ones are children of the kingdom.

Jesus strongly warns against causing offenses (vv. 6-9).

II. LIVE PEACEABLY WITH ALL MEN

Read: Romans 12:18

TALK ABOUT IT

On a scale from 1-10, how do you measure up when it comes to living peaceably with all people?

THINK ABOUT IT

The Apostle Paul teaches believers to live at peace with everyone. This means we are always seeking peaceful resolutions and working diligently to cultivate peace in disputes.

When an offense does occur, what can I do to bring peace to the situation?

When an offense disrupts the peace in our lives, there are at least three ways to respond;

- Pursue peace
- Retaliate or seek revenge
- Ignore the fire and hope it burns out

The biblical response is to do everything in our power to restore peace with everyone, especially with another believer.

III. JESUS’ PLAN FOR CONFLICT

Read: Matthew 18:15-20

TALK ABOUT IT

At what point do you put matters of offense into the hands of God?



THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus Himself knew the challenge of keeping peace, so He gave us His Father's plan for settling disputes.

- 1) Go to the person who offended you; tell them their fault (v. 15).
- 2) If they do not hear, take one or two witnesses (v. 16).
- 3) If the offense is not settled, Jesus says, tell it to the whole church. (vv. 17-18).

IV. FORGIVENESS AND UNFORGIVENESS

Read: Matthew 18:21-35

TALK ABOUT IT

What are the results of forgiveness? What are the results of unforgiveness?

THINK ABOUT IT

The parable of the unforgiving servant illustrates the power of forgiveness and the consequences of unforgiveness.

Jesus teaches us to ask forgiveness, and it will be given as many times as we ask for it, but if we are not willing to forgive others, our forgiveness is lost just like the unforgiving servant.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Talk about how the root of most offenses is perhaps a lack of humility?
- 2) People hurt us. Relationships can be hard. What makes it hard to live peaceably with those who break your trust?
- 3) What can you do to actively promote bringing peace to situations that impact you?
- 4) How does forgiving those who hurt us bring

greater freedom to us?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 18

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study this week's At-Home Scripture: Matthew 18. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.

2) Think of something powerful God has done for you. Maybe he healed you, provided when you needed it, or carried you through a dark season. Think of one event and then find something that is a reminder of this event. This can be anything that is significant to you and an object or something you choose that reminds you of it. Set this some place as a reminder of that moment when God moved on your behalf. When you see it, take the opportunity to thank God for bringing you through that moment.

3) This week's lesson might have brought up difficult things from your past. How we deal with these old wounds can alter our lives moving forward. The first step is forgiveness. Ask yourself, "Who do I need to forgive?" "Is hurt and anger keeping me from extending forgiveness?" Commit that individual and your hurt to the Lord. **It is important to acknowledge that some hurts might require the help of a pastor or counselor to process. The hurt may be so deep that forgiveness is painful. Facing our wounds (acknowledging their harm and existence) allows the Holy Spirit to do the work of healing that we need. But for our spiritual health and well-being, we all must face these wounds.**



THE JOURNEY

LESSON EIGHT | TRUST IN THE FUTURE

Today's lesson declares that we can and should trust God with our future. For the Christian, there are only two options: Will I choose to write my own story, or will I trust God with my future and let Him write my story?

We are not capable of writing a great story. God's plans for our lives are far better than any we could make for ourselves. Unfortunately, many Christians continue trying to script their own stories without trusting God to pen them.

I. ACT 1 — THE SELF-LIFE

Read: Genesis 25:23

TALK ABOUT IT

The self-life describes a person who is determined to accomplish his desires by any means. We have heard the saying, "The end does not justify the means." Jacob's life demonstrates this adage. Have you ever known someone who lived a self-life?

THINK ABOUT IT

Scene 1—Jacob Is Lying

- Jacob's name means "deceiver," and he lived up to that label.
- Working to get our own way is a losing proposition.

Scene 2—Jacob Is Learning

- Jacob is forced to go live with his uncle. For twenty years, he lived and learned that it was like to have people deceive and trick him even as he had done to his own

brother and father.

- Yet, during this season of his life, Jacob was learning a valuable life lesson.

II. ACT 2 — THE SURRENDERED LIFE

Read: Genesis 32:24-29

TALK ABOUT IT

Good News: No one has to continue to live the self-life. Each one of us has the opportunity to surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. We can stop writing our own story and hand the pen to our Lord and live the life He desires for us. This is what we call the surrendered life. What is the greatest obstacle in your life that prevents full surrender to God?

THINK ABOUT IT

In the next two scenes, we observe how Jacob surrendered his life to the plan, or purposes, of God.

Scene 3—Jacob Is Limping

- The Bible teaches us clearly that God blesses us when we choose to stop trusting ourselves and trust Him to write His story for our lives.
- God does not want to see you defeated, but He does want you to be dependent.
- The surrendered life is a winning proposition. Only as we are conquered are we able to become conquerors.

Scene 4—Jacob Is Leaning

- In the last chapter of Jacob's life, we see him leaning on his staff having been truly



blessed by God and able to be a blessing to others.

PRAYER: Father God, we want to confess that too often we live our own way. Forgive us of the sin of self-reliance and help us to turn from the self-life and surrender to Your will and way. Today, we ask that Your will be done in our lives. Amen!

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Talk about a time that you have tried to plan or write your story instead of allowing God to lead. How did that end?
- 2) Why is it hard to fully trust God with the plans for your life and give up selfish desires?
- 3) We often hear of people having to "hit rock-bottom" before surrendering to Jesus and trusting His plans. What do we learn by "hitting rock-bottom"?
- 4) We will continually have to surrender our selfish plans for the far greater plans Jesus has for us. How does trusting His plan, that may feel uncertain, actually bring us peace?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Jeremiah 29:1-14; Matthew 6:19-34

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study this week's At-Home Scriptures: Jeremiah 29:1-14 and Matthew 6:19-34. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.
- 2) Jesus deserves our very best—our worship. Set aside time this week to focus on Jesus' power and glory. On Saturday evening, begin

preparing your heart to worship on Sunday. Go early to church expecting to experience God. Worship and thank God for all the ways that He is the Answer in your life. Pray for those around you to also experience God during the service.

- 3) Generosity is not something reserved for those we love. Jesus admonishes us to do good, not only to those who are kind to us, but also to those who are not. This week do something helpful or kind for someone you don't know, for someone who has not done anything for you.
- 4) We have now reached the mid-point of The Journey. Spend some time this week reflecting on your experience so far. It might be helpful to write a letter to yourself. Here are some possible questions you could ask: Where have you found yourself becoming more like Jesus? What areas of your life are you still trying to control? Are you still trying to write your own story? After you finish your letter, commit yourself to fully trust God with your life. He's trustworthy.

