

Leadership Guide

The Expectations Of
God



A BIBLICAL LOOK INTO THE CHRISTIAN WALK

Leadership Guide Introduction

Welcome, Leader!

Thank you for stepping into the role of leading others through *The Expectations of God*. This Leadership Guide is designed to equip and support you as you walk with your group through ten powerful, scripture-based unit studies that challenge, encourage, and inspire transformation in the lives of believers.

Purpose of the Leadership Guide

This guide exists to:

- Provide structure and direction for each weekly session
- Help facilitate meaningful discussion that goes deeper than surface-level conversation
- Offer prayer prompts, reflection questions, and memory verse engagement
- Encourage spiritual growth that leads to action, not just information

We created this guide not just for information delivery but for *life application and transformation*. Our hope is that your group becomes a space where people experience God's truth personally and respond with real change.

What Is the "Read-and-Go" Style?

This guide follows a "read-and-go" format, meaning:

- Group members take turns reading sections aloud from the book during each session
- The leader pauses the reading at pre-marked moments for discussion using prompts and questions
- The flow is interactive, engaging, and relational, not lecture-style teaching
- Everyone participates: readers, reflectors, and those still figuring out what faith means for them

This format keeps things simple, Spirit-led, and easy to facilitate, no seminary degree required! It's designed to help people hear the Word, speak the Word, and live the Word *together*.

Leader Role & Expectations

As the leader, you are:

- A facilitator, not a lecturer
- A spiritual encourager, not a performer
- A shepherd who sets the tone of grace, truth, and vulnerability

You don't need all the answers. Your job is to create a safe space for discovery, honest conversation, and Holy Spirit - led growth.

We encourage you to:

- Pray before each session
- Use the guide's prompts to foster deep reflection
- Be flexible, some discussions will go longer, and that's okay
- Challenge your group with weekly takeaways that move faith from words to action

Our Hope for Your Group

We pray that this journey will:

- Deepen each member's understanding of what God expects from His people
- Help participants move from passive belief to active obedience
- Encourage transparency, accountability, and discipleship within your group
- Produce fruit in every person that glorifies God and impacts others

May your leadership reflect the love of Christ, and may your group become a movement of everyday believers living out God's expectations in everyday life.

You're not alone in this, the Holy Spirit is with you, and this guide is here to help.

Let's get started.

**In His strength,
Armor of God Team**

Prerequisite for Leaders and Participants

Before engaging in The Expectations of God study, it is essential that all leaders and participants understand the foundational importance of accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. This book is designed to explore God's expectations for those who have entered into a relationship with Him through faith in Christ. Without this commitment, the lessons and teachings may not fully resonate or have the intended spiritual impact.

Accepting Christ means recognizing your need for salvation, repenting of sin, and trusting in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection for your forgiveness and new life. This personal decision is the gateway to truly experiencing God's grace and living according to His purposes.

If you or any participant have not yet made this commitment, we encourage you to pause, seek God's guidance through prayer, and consider the invitation Jesus extends to all people:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:16**

This study will be most meaningful when approached from a heart that has been transformed by Christ's love. Leaders are encouraged to gently affirm this prerequisite with participants as a foundation for growth throughout the journey.

Leadership Guide – Unit 1: *The Quest*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Let's take a moment to welcome each other and invite the Holy Spirit into this time."

Sample Prayer:

"Father, thank You for bringing us together. We ask You to open our hearts and minds to hear from You. Let this time draw us closer to You and help us understand what You expect from us. In Jesus' name, amen."

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Go around the group and take turns reading aloud from Unit 1. Read in manageable paragraphs or 3–5 sentence blocks.

Leader Cues for Discussion:

Pause #1 — After reading about the author's personal journey

Prompt:

"What stood out to you about the author's early desire to find purpose?"

Follow-up Questions:

- Have you ever felt like you were searching for something deeper?
 - How do you think that "quest" starts in someone's life?
-

Pause #2 - At the first Scripture mention: Isaiah 40:31

Prompt:

"Let's pause and read this verse together again: 'But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength...'"

Discussion:

- What kind of strength do you think this verse is talking about?
- When have you experienced this type of strength in your own walk?

Pause #3 - Where the book discusses obedience and surrender

Prompt:

"This part talks about giving up control and trusting God."

Ask:

- Why is surrender so hard?
- What is one area in your life where God may be asking you to let go?

Pause #4 — Closing reflections from the chapter

Prompt:

- How is your own spiritual “quest” similar or different from the author’s?
- What is God asking you to pursue more intentionally this season?

Memory Verse Engagement (Philippians 4:6)

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

Activity Options:

- Read the verse aloud together.
- Invite one person to reflect: *“What does this verse mean to you right now?”*
- Optional: Invite everyone to write it down on a notecard for the week.

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

God has placed a “quest” in every heart — a desire to follow Him fully. This journey starts with surrender and trust.

Challenge:

“This week, identify one thing you're holding onto and commit it to God. Say a daily prayer of surrender.”

Journaling Prompt (Optional):

“What do I need to let go of in order to move forward in my faith?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Invite someone to pray or use this sample:

“Lord, thank You for this time together. Thank You for showing us that You’ve placed a holy quest in each of us. Help us to walk in trust and obedience this week. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ **Managing Time**

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ **Guiding Discussion**

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ **Encouraging Quiet Participants**

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ **Keeping Focus**

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 2: *The Expedition*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Let's begin by giving this time to God and asking Him to guide us on today's expedition."

Sample Prayer:

"Lord, thank You for calling us to walk with You. As we journey through this lesson, help us recognize the places we've been stuck, the ways You've led us, and the path You've set before us. Speak to each heart, in Jesus' name. Amen."

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Continue the group reading rotation. Pause at the natural scene breaks or when a scripture or reflection appears.

Pause #1 – After the author talks about wilderness experiences

Prompt:

"Let's stop and think about this idea of the wilderness."

Ask:

- Have you ever gone through a spiritual "wilderness"?
- What helped you keep going during that season?

Scripture tie-in: Reflect on the Israelites' 40-year wilderness in Exodus — what was God teaching them?

Pause #2 – At the first key Scripture: Matthew 22:37

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Discuss:

- What does it really mean to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind?

- Which one of these areas do you find hardest to surrender — your heart, your soul, or your mind?
-

Pause #3 – When the book speaks of being stuck in Egypt

Prompt:

"This part mentions being stuck spiritually, like the Israelites were stuck in Egypt."

Ask:

- What are some modern-day “Egypt’s” that Christians can get trapped in?
 - Can you name a time God helped you break free from something?
-

Pause #4 – When obedience and direction are emphasized

Prompt:

"What does it look like to trust God when we don't know where He's leading?"

Discussion:

- How can you tell the difference between waiting on God and making excuses?
 - What's one way you can move forward in obedience this week?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (Matthew 22:37)

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Activity Options:

- Have 2–3 people repeat the verse aloud with emotion.
 - Ask: “What does this verse reveal about God’s expectations?”
 - Challenge: Memorize this verse and recite it to a friend or family member this week.
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

Like the Israelites, we are all on an expedition with God. It's easy to look back to Egypt, but He's calling us forward in faith and obedience.

Challenge:

"This week, take one step forward in your spiritual expedition — whether in prayer, obedience, or letting go of the past."

Optional Journaling Prompt:

"What's one area where I've been afraid to move forward?"

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

"Lord, we thank You for being our Guide through the wilderness and into the Promised Land of purpose. Give us courage to move forward in faith and help us trust You even when the way is unclear. In Jesus' name, amen."

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ Guiding Discussion

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: "Let's hear from someone else."
- If conversation stalls: "Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?"

☒ Encouraging Quiet Participants

- Make eye contact and ask gently: "Would you like to add anything?"
- Use affirming phrases like: "That's a great point," or "Thanks for sharing."

☒ Keeping Focus

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.

- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 3: *The Word of God*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Today's focus is the foundation of everything in our walk with Christ — His Word. Let's invite God to speak to us through Scripture."

Sample Prayer:

“Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Word. It is truth, light, and life. Open our eyes today to see what You want us to understand. Let Your Word take root in us and transform us. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Have group members continue taking turns reading aloud. Pause at key scripture moments and bold statements for reflection.

Pause #1 – After the author's comparison of the Bible to spiritual food

Prompt:

"Let's pause here and talk about this idea of spiritual nourishment."

Ask:

- How often do you personally “feed” on God’s Word?
- In what ways does reading the Bible strengthen your spiritual walk?

Optional tie-in:

Jesus said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4).

Pause #2 – When the book discusses distractions and neglecting God’s Word

Prompt:

"This part calls out how easily we allow other things to take priority over Scripture."

Ask:

- What distractions most often pull you away from the Word?
 - How can we build better habits of staying in God’s Word daily?
-

Pause #3 – Scripture focus: Psalm 119:105 (paraphrased in the book)

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

Discuss:

- What does it mean for the Bible to be a lamp for your feet?
 - Share a time when Scripture helped guide you through a tough decision.
-

Pause #4 – The challenge to obey what you read

Prompt:

"It’s one thing to read the Bible, but what about doing what it says?"

Ask:

- What keeps us from applying Scripture to our lives?
 - Can you name one command from Scripture you’re working on obeying right now?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (1 Corinthians 12:12)

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ."

(Although this is listed as the memory verse for this chapter, it reflects the theme of unity and the Word’s instruction for the Church.)

Activity Options:

- Read it aloud as a group.
 - Ask: “How does God’s Word help unify us as the body of Christ?”
 - Challenge: Reflect this week on how Scripture helps build and strengthen community.
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

God’s Word isn’t optional — it’s essential. It corrects, encourages, and leads us. It is God’s direct communication with us.

Challenge:

“This week, commit to reading the Bible at least 10 minutes every day. Choose a book (like John or James), and reflect on one thing God is saying to you.”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“What scripture has recently spoken deeply to me, and how can I live it out?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“God, thank You for Your Word. Help us to be not just hearers but doers of what You say. Give us a hunger for the Bible and the courage to live by it. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ Guiding Discussion

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ Encouraging Quiet Participants

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ Keeping Focus

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 4: *The Body*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Today we're exploring how we fit together as the Body of Christ. Let's invite God to show us our role and how we can strengthen His Church."

Sample Prayer:

“Lord, thank You for making us part of something bigger than ourselves — Your Body. Help us to see the value of each person in this room and in Your Church. Teach us how to serve, love, and function together in unity. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Resume group reading with short sections per person. Pause when the text shifts focus to Scripture, unity, roles in the church, or spiritual gifts.

Pause #1 – After the description of the Church as a body

Prompt:

"Let's reflect on what it means for the Church to be described as a body."

Ask:

- Why do you think Paul chose the human body as a metaphor for the Church?
 - What do you think your role or function in the Body of Christ might be?
-

Pause #2 – At the memory verse: 1 Corinthians 12:12

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ."

Discussion:

- What happens in a body when one part doesn't function?
 - How do you think unity and purpose impact the health of a church?
-

Pause #3 – When the book talks about isolation and lone Christianity

Prompt:

"The book warns against trying to walk with Christ alone. Let's talk about that."

Ask:

- Have you ever tried to "go it alone" in your walk with God?
 - What benefits have you seen from being part of a local church or small group?
-

Pause #4 – Spiritual gifts and purpose

Prompt:

"Each of us has something to contribute. Let's pause here."

Ask:

- Do you know what your spiritual gift is?
- How can you use it — or begin exploring it — in this season?

Optional Tool:

If your group hasn't already done so, refer to the *Spiritual Gifts Test* in the back of the book (pages 226–229).

Memory Verse Engagement (1 Corinthians 12:12)

“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So, it is with the body of Christ.”

Activity Options:

- Ask: “How do you think this verse applies to us right here in this room?”
 - Optional Visual: Draw a stick figure with labeled “parts” that represent different roles (e.g., hands = service, mouth = evangelism, heart = mercy).
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

You are not an accident. You are a necessary, God-designed part of the Church. When each part functions well, the Body thrives.

Challenge:

“This week, intentionally connect with someone in your church and find a way to serve together — even if it's small.”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“What gift or talent has God given me to build up others?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“Lord, thank You for calling us to be part of Your Body. Help us not to compare ourselves to others but to value the gift You’ve placed in us. Show us how to walk in unity and love. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.

- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ **Guiding Discussion**

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ **Encouraging Quiet Participants**

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ **Keeping Focus**

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 5: *The Captain of My Ship*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Today's study reminds us who is really in control of our lives. Let's invite God to steer this conversation and help us surrender to His leadership."

Sample Prayer:

“Father, You are our Captain — the One who knows where we’re going and how we’ll get there. Help us release the wheel and follow Your lead. Speak to each of us today, and give us courage to trust You with every area of our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Begin the group reading rotation. Encourage shorter readings between pauses, especially during key analogies and scripture applications.

Pause #1 – After the personal boat/captain metaphor is introduced**Prompt:**

"Let's talk about this image of Jesus being the Captain of our ship."

Ask:

- Have you ever tried to steer your own life without consulting God?
 - What was the result?
 - Why is it hard to give up control, even to someone we trust?
-

Pause #2 – Scripture focus: Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Discuss:

- How does this verse encourage you in moments of uncertainty or weakness?
- What's the difference between "doing it all" and "doing all things through Christ"?

Optional Reflection:

Ask someone to share a personal story where they depended on God's strength rather than their own.

Pause #3 – When the book addresses obedience even when God's direction seems unclear**Prompt:**

"This part challenges us to trust God's plan, even when we don't fully understand it."

Ask:

- Can you recall a time when God asked you to step out in faith?
 - What did that experience teach you about trust?
-

Pause #4 – The storm metaphor (navigating through life’s challenges)

Prompt:

"Storms will come — the real question is, who’s steering when they do?"

Ask:

- When you face a storm, what does it look like for God to be your Captain?
 - What helps you stay calm and grounded in those seasons?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (Philippians 4:13)

“I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”

Activity Options:

- Invite 2–3 people to repeat the verse slowly and reflectively.
 - Ask: “What’s one area of your life right now where you need Christ’s strength?”
 - Optional Group Challenge: Write the verse on a sticky note or index card and place it somewhere visible during the week.
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

We are not meant to captain our own lives. God sees what we can’t. When we allow Him to take the wheel, we’re safer, stronger, and more at peace — even in life’s storms.

Challenge:

“Each morning this week, start your day with this prayer: ‘Lord, I trust You to captain my life today. I surrender control to You.’”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“Where in my life am I still trying to take control instead of letting God lead?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“God, thank You for being the One we can trust to lead us. We confess we don’t always surrender easily, but we want You to be our Captain. Help us yield to You in every area of life and follow Your course no matter the cost. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ Guiding Discussion

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ Encouraging Quiet Participants

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ Keeping Focus

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 6: *The Mighty Oak*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"This week we're looking at spiritual maturity — becoming rooted and strong in Christ like a mighty oak. Let's ask God to help us grow deep and stand tall."

Sample Prayer:

“Lord, thank You for calling us to grow strong in You. Help us to become firmly rooted in Your

Word and character. Shape us into men and women of strength, endurance, and deep faith. In Jesus' name, amen."

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Continue reading around the group. Encourage reflection at points that describe growth, pruning, storms, or the strength of deep roots.

Pause #1 – After the introduction of the oak tree metaphor

Prompt:

"The author compares mature believers to mighty oaks. Let's talk about that."

Ask:

- What characteristics of an oak tree stand out to you?
- How can those traits be reflected in a believer's life?

Optional Tie-In:

Read Isaiah 61:3 — *"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor."*

Pause #2 – When the book discusses roots and spiritual depth

Prompt:

"This section talks about having deep roots in Christ."

Ask:

- What are the "roots" of your spiritual life?
 - What are some ways to strengthen those roots?
-

Pause #3 – When storms and testing are mentioned

Prompt:

"Even the strongest trees face storms. Let's reflect on that."

Ask:

- What's a spiritual storm you've been through?
- How did God use that storm to strengthen your faith?

Encouragement Tip: That Reinforce us

Storms don't mean weakness — they reveal the depth of our roots and grow us.

Pause #4 – When the book calls for spiritual maturity

Prompt:

"This part challenges us to move beyond immaturity."

Ask:

- What does spiritual maturity look like in daily life?
 - How do you know you're growing?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (Isaiah 40:31 – repeated for deeper reflection)

"But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles..."

Activity Options:

- Invite group members to reflect on what "new strength" looks like in their current season.
 - Challenge: Choose one specific area to grow deeper roots (prayer, scripture, accountability, etc.).
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

God doesn't want us to remain saplings. He calls us to become mighty oaks — resilient, fruitful, and rooted in Him.

Challenge:

"This week, commit to one spiritual growth habit: daily prayer, regular scripture reading, or joining a new area of service."

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“What area of my life needs deeper roots in God’s truth?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“Father, we want to be oaks of righteousness — strong, faithful, and rooted in You. Show us where we need to grow, prune what doesn’t belong, and help us remain steadfast in every season. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ **Managing Time**

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- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ **Guiding Discussion**

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ **Encouraging Quiet Participants**

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ **Keeping Focus**

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 7: *A Purpose and a Plan*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Today we're focusing on God's purpose and plan for each of us. Let's ask Him to reveal how we fit into His bigger picture."

Sample Prayer:

"God, thank You that You have a plan and a purpose for every one of us. Help us see past the distractions and doubts. Remind us that we were made for something eternal. Speak clearly to each of our hearts today. In Jesus' name, amen."

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Rotate reading as usual. Encourage pausing at any sections where God's plan, identity, or calling is emphasized.

Pause #1 – When the author reflects on God's design for our lives

Prompt:

"Let's stop here. What do you think it means that God designed you with a purpose?"

Ask:

- Do you believe your life has a God-given purpose?
 - What helps you stay focused on that purpose in the chaos of everyday life?
-

Pause #2 – Scripture focus: Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord...

Discuss:

- What emotions rise up when you hear this verse?
 - Have you ever doubted God's plan? What helped restore your faith?
-

Pause #3 – When the book mentions detours and waiting

Prompt:

"Sometimes God's plan includes waiting or rerouting us. Let's talk about that."

Ask:

- Have you experienced a spiritual “detour”? What did you learn?
- How can waiting on God strengthen us?

Bonus Scripture (optional):

Proverbs 16:9 — *“In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.”*

Pause #4 – When the book challenges us to take action

Prompt:

"This part encourages us to not just know our purpose but walk in it."

Ask:

- What is one area where you sense God calling you to step forward?
 - What holds you back from taking action on God's plan?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (Jeremiah 29:11)

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

Activity Options:

- Read the verse aloud together with emphasis on **hope** and **future**.
 - Invite someone to share a time they saw God's plan unfold in hindsight.
 - Write it on a sticky note and keep it visible throughout the week.
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

God is not random. He created you with intentionality. Even when you feel lost, He is guiding you with a plan and a purpose.

Challenge:

“Spend 10 minutes this week in prayer specifically asking God to clarify your calling or next step in His plan.”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“What do I sense God is calling me toward right now? How can I prepare to move in that direction?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“Lord, thank You for having a plan and a purpose for each of us. Help us not to chase our own ideas but to follow where You lead. Give us clarity, courage, and faith to walk in the calling You’ve placed on our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

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☒ Guiding Discussion

- Encourage multiple people to share.
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- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ Encouraging Quiet Participants

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ Keeping Focus

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 8: *The Narrow Gate*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Today's study is a sobering and powerful reminder — following Jesus means choosing the narrow path. Let's ask God for clarity and courage."

Sample Prayer:

“Lord, thank You for showing us the way to life, even when it’s not the easy way. As we study together, open our eyes to the areas where we’ve drifted. Challenge us to live differently — to choose the narrow road that leads to You. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Rotate reading around the group. Pause when discussing Scripture, cultural pressures, and personal choices.

Pause #1 – When the “narrow gate” is introduced (Matthew 7:13–14)

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction...”

Prompt:

"Let's pause here and talk about what Jesus meant by this passage."

Ask:

- What does the narrow gate represent to you?
 - Why do you think so many people choose the wide road?
-

Pause #2 – After the author contrasts culture vs. Christ

Prompt:

"This section challenges how the world often influences us more than the Word."

Ask:

- Where do you see culture pulling people off the narrow path?
 - How can we guard ourselves against that drift?
-

Pause #3 – When obedience and sacrifice are mentioned

Prompt:

"Walking the narrow path requires both trust and sacrifice."

Ask:

- What have you had to give up or surrender to follow Christ more fully?
 - Has it been worth it?
-

Pause #4 – When the author mentions being “all in”

Prompt:

"This part draws a line — are we really all in for Jesus?"

Ask:

- What do you think it means to be “all in” as a follower of Christ?
 - Is there an area in your life that you’ve been hesitant to surrender?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (Matthew 7:13–14)

“Enter through the narrow gate... But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Activity Options:

- Read it together slowly, emphasizing *life* and *few*.
- Ask: “What part of this verse challenges you the most?”

- Optional Group Reflection: “What does choosing the narrow road look like practically in our lives this week?”
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

The narrow gate leads to life, but few choose it. Following Jesus isn’t about blending in — it’s about standing out and walking in truth.

Challenge:

“Do one thing this week that reflects the narrow path — even if it’s unpopular, uncomfortable, or inconvenient.”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“Where in my life am I tempted to take the wide road? What’s stopping me from turning back to the narrow gate?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“Jesus, You are the gate and the way. Help us not just admire You from a distance, but follow You closely. Give us strength to walk the narrow path even when it’s hard, and help us lead others to life. In Your name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ Guiding Discussion

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ **Encouraging Quiet Participants**

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ **Keeping Focus**

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 9: *The Fig Tree*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"Today’s study focuses on bearing real fruit in our walk with Christ. Let’s invite God to help us examine our lives honestly."

Sample Prayer:

“Lord, thank You for showing us that fruitfulness matters to You. Help us not just look alive, but truly live in You. As we read and reflect today, open our eyes to any area in us that needs pruning or purpose. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Rotate reading around the group. Pause when discussing Jesus' actions, spiritual fruit, and what fruitlessness might mean.

Pause #1 – When Jesus curses the fig tree (Matthew 21:18–22)

“Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves...”

Prompt:

"Let's talk about why Jesus responded this way."

Ask:

- What do the leaves without fruit represent?
 - How might this apply to people who look spiritual on the outside?
-

Pause #2 – After the author compares external religion vs. internal transformation

Prompt:

"This part challenges us to go beyond appearance and into spiritual substance."

Ask:

- What's the difference between performance and fruit?
 - What kind of fruit do you think God is looking for in us?
-

Pause #3 – When the lesson turns inward: personal fruit inspection

Prompt:

"This section invites honest reflection on whether our faith is producing results."

Ask:

- Where have you seen growth in your life recently?
 - Is there an area you feel spiritually dry or barren?
-

Pause #4 – As the chapter discusses God's desire for fruitfulness in all seasons

Prompt:

"God expects fruit not just in harvest seasons, but always."

Ask:

- What helps you remain spiritually fruitful in dry or difficult seasons?
 - How can we encourage one another to stay rooted in Christ?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (Matthew 21:18–22)

“May you never bear fruit again! Immediately the tree withered.”

Activity Options:

- Read it slowly as a group, then in silence.
 - Ask: “How does this verse feel harsh — and why is it still loving?”
 - Optional Group Reflection: “What kind of fruit do you want to see more of in your life this month?”
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

God isn’t interested in appearances — He wants real fruit that reflects a transformed heart.

Challenge:

“Identify one area of your life where you can bear better fruit this week — in your family, work, or ministry.”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“What spiritual fruit is missing from my walk with God? What’s holding it back?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“Father, prune what needs pruning in our lives. Grow us into disciples who not only appear alive, but who truly are. Help us abide in You and bear fruit that lasts. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ **Managing Time**

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ **Guiding Discussion**

- Encourage multiple people to share.

- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ **Encouraging Quiet Participants**

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ **Keeping Focus**

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”

Leadership Guide – Unit 10: *The New You*

Opening Prayer & Welcome (2–3 min)

Leader Prompt:

"This final unit is a celebration of who we are in Christ — brand new, changed, and full of purpose. Let’s open with gratitude."

Sample Prayer:

“God, thank You that we are not who we used to be. You are making all things new in us. Today, give us fresh vision for what our lives can look like as new creations in Christ. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Read-and-Go Flow (35–45 min)

Instructions:

Rotate reading around the group. Pause when discussing transformation, identity, and leaving the past behind.

Pause #1 – When the new creation is introduced (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

Prompt:

"Let's talk about what it means to truly live as a new creation."

Ask:

- What does being “new” in Christ mean to you personally?
 - Why is it sometimes hard to let go of the “old self”?
-

Pause #2 – After the author discusses identity and labels

Prompt:

"This section reminds us that our identity isn't based on our past mistakes or titles."

Ask:

- What old labels have you had to shake off since following Christ?
 - What new identity are you growing into?
-

Pause #3 – When the author talks about freedom and transformation

Prompt:

"This part celebrates that we're not stuck — God is always working in us."

Ask:

- Where have you seen God changing you the most?
 - What's one area you're still praying for transformation?
-

Pause #4 – As the chapter encourages moving forward boldly

Prompt:

"Living as a new creation also means stepping into purpose."

Ask:

- What is God calling you to step into in this next season?
 - How can this group help you walk confidently in your new identity?
-

Memory Verse Engagement (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person...”

Activity Options:

- Declare it together: “I am a new creation in Christ!”
 - Ask: “What part of your past tries to sneak back in?”
 - Optional Group Reflection: “How can we remind one another to live like new creations?”
-

Weekly Challenge & Takeaway

Summary:

In Christ, you’re not just forgiven — you’re made new. This changes everything.

Challenge:

“Write down one lie about yourself you’ve believed — and replace it with God’s truth about who you are.”

Optional Journaling Prompt:

“What is one ‘old self’ behavior or belief I’m ready to leave behind for good?”

Closing Prayer (2–3 min)

Leader or Volunteer Prayer Suggestion:

“Jesus, thank You for making us new. Help us walk boldly in that identity — not looking back, but moving forward in freedom and joy. Keep growing us into Your image. In Your name, amen.”

Appendix A – Leader Tips

☒ Managing Time

- Watch the clock to ensure reading + discussions finish in 60–75 min.
- If short on time, limit pauses to just 2–3 main discussions.

☒ Guiding Discussion

- Encourage multiple people to share.
- If someone dominates, gently pivot: “Let’s hear from someone else.”
- If conversation stalls: “Would anyone be willing to share what hit home for them?”

☒ Encouraging Quiet Participants

- Make eye contact and ask gently: “Would you like to add anything?”
- Use affirming phrases like: “That’s a great point,” or “Thanks for sharing.”

☒ **Keeping Focus**

- Use scripture and memory verses to steer back if discussion wanders.
- Remind the group: “Let’s focus on what God may be saying through this chapter.”