

TOGETHER IN TRUTH BIBLE STUDY INITIATIVE

Small Group Bible Study: "Here Is a Tip"

Discovering the Secrets of Supernatural Ministry through the Iceberg Metaphor

Introduction

Welcome to the **TOGETHER IN TRUTH BIBLE STUDY INITIATIVE**, an ongoing movement by the Church of God Hanahan dedicated to deepening our grasp of God's Word and experiencing authentic spiritual transformation. This Bible study, titled "**Here Is a Tip**," builds on the powerful metaphor of the iceberg—reminding us that the visible “tip” of our faith, actions, and ministry is only possible because of what lies hidden beneath: a life rooted in the secret place of prayer, surrender to the Father, and unbreakable dependence on Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

In this session, we'll explore:

- The significance of the iceberg metaphor in Christian teaching.
- The contrast between Jesus' visible ministry and His “hidden” prayer life.
- Scriptural instances of “few-word” miracles, connecting them to secret place abiding.
- How supernatural ministry always flows from union with Christ and reliance on the Spirit, echoing Zechariah 4:6 (“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord”) and John 15:5 (“Without Me you can do nothing”).
- Practical steps for every believer to build a strong “hidden foundation” that will support a public life of victorious, Spirit-empowered ministry.

Group participation is central. Please engage with the discussion questions, Scripture readings, reflection prompts, and application exercises throughout the study.

For more teachings or to explore the full range of resources, visit thechurchofgodhanahan.org and look for the TOGETHER IN TRUTH BIBLE STUDY INITIATIVE resources page.

The Iceberg Metaphor: Seeing Beneath the Surface

What Do We Mean by the "Iceberg"?

Icebergs are awe-inspiring natural wonders. What's visible above the water—a jagged, majestic peak—is only a small part of the whole. In fact, more than **90% of an iceberg's mass lies submerged, unseen beneath the surface**. This “hidden” portion is what gives stability and substance to the tip we all can see.

- **The visible tip:** What others see—your words, serving, public acts, or ministry.
- **The hidden mass:** Your unseen times of prayer, personal worship, self-examination, surrender, humility, spiritual hunger, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Why Should Christians Care about the Iceberg Metaphor?

In Christian teaching, this metaphor cautions us not to judge solely by appearances—our own or others'. We are called to recognize that lasting fruitfulness, resilience in crisis, and true spiritual authority come not from outward “display” but from the deep, secret life with God below the surface.

Jesus and the Iceberg: The Model Par Excellence

- The "tip": Jesus' public miracles, preaching, authority—seen by all.
- The "mass below": Jesus' countless hours alone in prayer with the Father; His continual dependence upon, and surrender to, the Holy Spirit.

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 16:7 (God looks at the heart, not just outward appearance); Matthew 6:5-6 (pray in secret); Psalm 139:23-24.

Group Discussion:

- Can you think of moments when you felt strong publicly, but knew your “hidden” life needed attention?
 - Why does God care so much about the “underwater” part of our spiritual life?
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Scripture Exploration: Jesus’ Hidden Life and Few-Word Miracles

1. Jesus’ Hidden Prayer Life: Foundations of Power

Scripture makes clear that Jesus’ greatest “public” works flowed directly from His private time with the Father:

a) Frequent Withdrawal to Pray

- Mark 1:35—Rising “a great while before day,” Jesus went out to a solitary place to pray.
- Luke 5:16—Jesus “often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”
- Luke 6:12—He “spent the night praying to God” before selecting His apostles.

b) Prayer before Decisions or Miracles

- Luke 3:21-22—He prays before the Holy Spirit descends at His baptism.
- Matthew 14:23—He prays after feeding the 5,000, before walking on water.
- Luke 22:39-44—In Gethsemane, Jesus surrenders His will, praying with such intensity His sweat was as “drops of blood”.

Key Point: The tip (public miracles and authority) is inexplicable apart from the hidden mass (His sustained, secret communion with the Father).

Discussion Prompt:

- What practical steps do you see in Jesus' prayer habits that you could model?
- How does solitude with God anchor your work "above the surface"?

2. Miracles with Few Words: Authority Rooted in Abiding

Jesus often spoke only a *handful of words* to work supernatural wonders—words that carried the authority of One deeply rooted in the Father and full of the Holy Spirit.

a) Calming the Storm:

Mark 4:39—Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" The storm immediately ceased.

b) Raising Lazarus:

John 11:43—With a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" The dead man arose.

c) Healing the Sick:

Matthew 8:3—"Be clean!" and the leper was cleansed. Mark 2:10-12—"Rise, take your bed, and go home" and the paralytic walks.

d) Delivering the Demonized:

Mark 1:25—"Be quiet! Come out of him!" and the demon departs.

e) Resurrection Commands:

Mark 5:41—"Talitha koum... Little girl, I say to you, get up!"

Luke 7:14—"Young man, I say to you, arise!"

In each case, the brevity and efficacy of Jesus' words testify that His authority did not stem from rhetorical flourish but from a hidden, Spirit-empowered life of communion with the Father.

Table: Connecting Few-Word Miracles to the Secret Place

Miracle/Event	Jesus' Words	Scriptural Connection to Secret Prayer
Calming the storm	"Peace, be still!"	Had just come from teaching and often from prayer (Mark 1:35, Mark 4:39)
Raising Lazarus	"Lazarus, come forth!"	Prayed first: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me..." (John 11:41-43)
Healing leper	"Be clean!"	Often withdrew to pray before/after healing (Luke 5:12-16)
Casting out demons	"Be silent and come out!"	Spent all night in prayer before busy ministry days (Mark 1:32-39)
Raising Jairus' daughter	"Little girl, get up!"	Entered alone, prayed, then commanded (Mark 5:35-42)

Detailed Context: Notice that before every season of intense public ministry or every major decision (like the choosing of the Twelve or facing the cross), Jesus chose *not* to lean on His own wisdom or effort, but retreated into the Father's presence.

Discussion Prompt:

- Why do you think Jesus "needed" to pray so much?
- How does His secret life explain the ease and power of His public commands?

Key Theological Foundations: Supernatural Power Flows from Abiding and Dependence

1. "Not by Might, nor by Power, but by My Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6)

This Old Testament prophecy describes how God's purposes (like the rebuilding of the Temple) are never accomplished by mere human effort, strength, or wisdom, but by the supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit:

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6)

Application:

- The work God sets before us—overcoming sin, ministering to others, living out the gospel—requires Spirit-empowered action, not mere willpower or talent.
- Zerubbabel faced opposition, discouragement, and impossible odds but was promised triumph through God's Spirit.

Group Study:

- In what ways do you try to “build the temple” in your own strength?
- What would it look like for your small group to move from “might and power” to an explicit, daily dependence on God’s Spirit?

2. “Apart from Me, You Can Do Nothing” (John 15:5)

In John 15, Jesus uses another metaphor: *He is the vine; we are the branches*. Bearing lasting spiritual fruit is only possible through continuous, living connection to Him.

“I am the vine, you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

Key Insights:

- “Abiding” is not a mystical state, but a practical, ongoing dependence on Christ for wisdom, strength, and fruitfulness.
- The “fruit” is evidence of inward connection, not outward effort.

Discussion Prompt:

- What does “abiding in Christ” look like for you, practically speaking?
- What do you notice in your own life when your “hidden” connection (the mass of the iceberg) is weak or neglected?

3. Role of the Holy Spirit: The Engine of Supernatural Ministry

Throughout both Testaments, the Holy Spirit is described as:

- The **empowering presence** for ministry (Acts 1:8; Luke 4:18–19)
- The **giver of spiritual gifts** and manifestation of God’s power (1 Corinthians 12:4–11)
- The **wisdom and comfort** that guides, enables, and convicts (John 14–16)
- The **unifying force** that binds the church together (Ephesians 4:3–4; Acts 2).

Just as Jesus was “anointed by the Holy Spirit and power” (Acts 10:38), so are believers today called to minister, not from natural ability, but from Holy Spirit empowerment.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Opening Icebreaker:

- Share about a time you made a snap judgment about a person or situation, only to find there was much more “below the surface.” What did you learn?

Digging Deeper:

1. Read Mark 4:35-41.

- What stands out to you about Jesus' words and actions in calming the storm?
- Why do you think Jesus was able to exercise such authority with so few words?
- What do you notice about the disciples' faith before and after the miracle?

2. Read Luke 5:15-16 and Mark 1:35-39.

- Why did Jesus make an intentional habit of getting away to pray?
- What invitations or challenges do you feel as you reflect on Jesus' prayer life?

3. Read John 15:1-8.

- How does Jesus describe the connection between Himself and us?
- What does Jesus mean by "apart from me, you can do nothing"? What does "fruit" look like in your life?

4. Read Zechariah 4:6-7.

- What does this passage teach us about the difference between human effort and Spirit-empowered ministry?
- When have you experienced the limits of "might and power" in your Christian walk? When have you seen God do something "by His Spirit"?

5. Personal Reflection:

- What percentage of your energy goes into cultivating the "hidden" life (prayer, surrender, seeking God in secret) versus "public" duties or service?
- What needs to shift for you to move the weight of your iceberg "below" the waterline?

Reflection Prompts

Invite group members to sit quietly with one or more of these questions, journaling or praying as the Holy Spirit leads:

- "Lord, reveal to me what is hidden in my life that needs to be brought to You. Is there anything beneath the surface that is untouched by Your grace and truth?"
- "Is the tip of my iceberg (my public life) disproportionately large compared to my hidden foundation? What's one small step I can take to deepen my 'secret place' foundations this week?"
- "Have I grown complacent in abiding, instead depending on my gifting, experience, or reputation? What does it mean for me to come back to reliance on Your Spirit today?"

- “In what ways do I see spiritual fruit as evidence of abiding, not self-effort? Where am I still striving in my own strength?”
 - "How has my prayer life changed over time? When did I last experience the joy of encountering God in secret?"
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Practical Application

1. Schedule Your Secret Place

- **Action Step:** Set aside intentional time each day—even just 15–20 minutes—to be alone with the Father, away from distractions. Use this time for prayer, worship, scripture meditation, and silent listening.
- **Challenge:** For the next week, prioritize your hidden time with God as essential, not optional. Write down what shifts in your thoughts and inner life as you do this.

2. Pray “Few-Word” Prayers with Confidence

- Practice praying like Jesus—with simplicity and faith. Instead of “many words,” ask the Holy Spirit to teach you to pray with authority that comes from abiding. For instance, when praying for someone’s healing or peace, say: “Be healed in Jesus’ name,” or “Peace, be still,” trusting the Spirit to move.

3. Replace Striving with Surrender

- When facing a ministry challenge, family crisis, or personal need, deliberately confess: “This cannot be achieved by might or power, but by Your Spirit, Lord.” Offer your weakness and inadequacy as an invitation for God’s power.

4. Seek Accountability

- Share with a trusted friend or group member about your desire to build the “hidden mass” of your iceberg. Ask them to check in and pray with you regularly about your secret place practices.

5. Memorize or Meditate on These Key Passages

Pick one or more of the following to meditate on this week:

- Zechariah 4:6
- John 15:5
- Mark 1:35
- Psalm 91:1 (“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”)
- Matthew 6:6

Table: Application Next Steps

Area to Strengthen	Step to Take	Personal Commitment
"Secret Place" Prayer	Schedule daily time of solitude with God	_____ (actual time set)
Surrender over Striving	Verbalize "by Your Spirit, not my power" in prayer	_____ (situation to surrender)
Spirit-empowered Words	Pray simple, faith-filled prayers over situations	_____ (date/instance to apply)
Accountability	Invite another to check in on your growth	_____ (who/when to connect)

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

- **True spiritual authority and fruitfulness are always rooted in the hidden “secret place” of prayer, surrender, and dependence on God.**
 - **The visible “tip” of your Christian life—ministry, public success, peace under pressure—is only as strong as your "submerged mass.”**
 - **Jesus’ life is our pattern: miracles flowed not from noise and effort but from solitude, prayer, and union with the Father's will, in the power of the Spirit.**
 - **Zechariah 4:6 and John 15:5 anchor us: all supernatural work is "not by might...but by My Spirit," and apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.**
 - **Practical, Spirit-empowered ministry is for every believer—and it starts in the secret place.**
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Additional Resources

- **Explore more TOGETHER IN TRUTH Bible Study materials, study guides, and audio/video teachings at: www.thechurchofgodntj.org**

- - **Recommended Reading:**
 - “The Power of the Secret Place” (Jennifer LeClaire Ministries)
 - “Living from the Secret Place” (Jake Kail)
 - “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality” (Peter Scazzero, especially on the iceberg metaphor)
 - Small group Bible study templates and question sets are available at BibleWisdomHub.org, SheepFeast.com, Biblestudyforyou.com, and similar resources.
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About the TOGETHER IN TRUTH BIBLE STUDY INITIATIVE

Our initiative is rooted in the calling of the Church of God:

Building the Kingdom of God with Truth & Love, one relationship at a time.

We are a Spirit-led, Bible-believing community, passionate about equipping believers for authentic, supernatural living as Jesus did—by abiding deeply in the Father’s presence and walking daily in truth.

Visit: www.thechurchofgodntj.org to discover more, join the Sabbath services, or download more free study resources.

Closing Prayer

Father, draw us back to the secret place, where our lives are hidden with Christ in God. Help us to abide in you, so that the visible fruit in our lives, our families, and our service will grow from the deep foundation of your Spirit’s presence. We declare: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord.’ May the world see the tip of the iceberg, but may you strengthen what is unseen, for your glory. Amen.
