

L E A D E R ' S      G U I D E

The *Holy Life* Bible Study Series

SERVING OTHERS  
ALONG THE ROAD:

Revealing Christ's Love Through Holiness

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BOOK 4

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# Introduction

If you have not already completed reading the introductory material for Book 1 of *The Holy Life Bible Study Series*, it is suggested that you go back and read that now as it will not be repeated for each book. I will, however, repeat the teaching techniques from the leader's guide to Book 1 so you won't have to refer back to it every time you want to use different teaching approaches.

## Preparing to Teach

Class leader, keep the following guidelines in mind as you prepare to teach this Bible study series:

- Read each book in its entirety before you begin the group study.
- Read this leader's guide in its entirety to get a feel for the general direction of the book study.
- Think of any teaching resources you will need for each individual session such as a whiteboard, chart paper, markers, overhead projector, 3" x 5" cards, Post-it notes, etc.
- Think of any students in your class you need to contact ahead of time to secure their permission to use personal stories or to get them to share their personal testimonies.
- Outline each lesson plan in your own words or map it on your own paper so you will feel a sense of direction for each session.
- Pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit: (1) in the way you prepare; (2) in what you say in class; (3) in the way you respond to comments or questions by class members; (4) in the way you give time for the Spirit to speak to class members' hearts as the session progresses.

## Using This Guide

This leader's guide is simply that—a guide. It suggests key points, lines of thought, discussion questions, personal reflection times, and a variety of other exercises to enhance your class time. Use the suggestions from this guide however you find them helpful, and devise your own plan if you wish. Expand the time devoted to activities you think will work well in your group, and feel free to delete activities you think may not work so well.

The key is to engage class members in material from the book and to help them find ways to apply it to their own lives. This study can change lives—not because the ideas from the book are so unique or rich, but because as the students read God's Word it will give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to direct them.

I designed this study guide to call attention to additional ideas and to enhance the thoughts expressed in the textbook and to encourage you to address certain concepts or discussion questions. I did not create an entire time-usage plan for each session. Rather, I have endeavored to furnish more than enough material to work within the Bible, the textbook, and this leader's guide so that you can design your own lesson plan based on what works best for your group. Have fun with it!

I start many of the leader's guides with a "Background Check" where I place cross-referenced

material from *Breaking Free from Sin's Grip*, *Coffee Shop Theology*, *More Coffee Shop Theology*, and *Dismantling the Myths*. Reading this material, along with the material in the Bible study books, furnishes plenty of information to lead a lively group discussion.

Each study is filled with references to Scripture. It may not be possible, given your time limitations, to read all of the passages aloud during each week's study session. However, provide opportunity during each group session to read some scriptures aloud. God enlivens His Word to the hearts of hearers better when it is read aloud than when we simply refer to it by chapter and verse. Assuming everyone will have studied the weekly focus scripture thoroughly before coming to the study session, this should be a time of review for everyone.

Each study has several sections of "Group Discussion." Encourage class members to write their thoughts as they read the material prior to coming to the Bible study session. If the space provided is not adequate for members to record their thoughts, encourage them to write their responses in a notebook. A three-ring binder works well and allows class members to add new material as desired. Remind the participants to bring their notebooks with them when they come to class and to be prepared to share their answers with the entire group.

Each study also has space devoted to "Personal Reflection." These questions and exercises are more private. Never call on a class member to publicly give his or her response to one of these exercises or you may share your own answers to these questions. Take care to not embarrass class members by asking for more information than their comfort levels allow.

Each study has at least one "Group Activity." These are important to encourage your group members to interact with one another in different ways and should be fun and lively. You can make the activities competitive or a group project. Either way, encourage everyone to participate. Participants will remember more of what they have studied if they go over the material in class in unique ways and take an active part.

Each study closes with a section called "For Further Study." Here's your opportunity to cross-reference the Scripture lesson for the week with other passages in the Bible. Please remind folks that the themes we study are not simply found in one location in the Bible. They are themes that thread their way throughout Scripture. Martin Luther taught the important Bible study method of letting Scripture interpret Scripture. That is, one of the best ways to learn the meaning of a passage of Scripture is to read other scriptures that discuss the same topic. Many study Bibles use this approach. Teach your class members to use this method of Bible study and apply it to this Bible study series.

Remember to take time at the end of each study for students to write additional questions or discussion ideas on 3" x 5" cards and place them in the Odds and Ends box. You'll discuss these questions at the end of each book in this series of studies.

## **Presentation Ideas**

One of the keys to good discussion is variety. Don't always present material from the book in lecture form, and don't always conduct a discussion by asking a question for the group to answer. There are a variety of presentation ideas throughout the study series that can usually be found in the Group Activity section. If you find that your group responds well to certain activities, make a note of these and use them again from time to time. Just don't wear out a good activity through overuse!

The following is a list of suggestions of group activities.

1. If you wish to use an alternate method to simply having an open-group discussion, you might give each class member two or more (depending on the number of questions being answered) large Post-it notes. Ask group members to write their answers to your questions on their Post-it notes. Then, let them stick their answers on a large piece of poster board with the main idea of the question written on it. You may also simply write the main idea of the question on a chalk or white board and post their responses below it. The leader can then read all of the answers and lead a discussion.
2. Divide your students into small groups—one group for each question you will ask. Assign each group one of the questions. Allow discussion time, then let each small group present its answer to the larger body.
3. Give each class member two 3" x 5" cards. Ask them to write their answers to the questions in a particular section on each of these cards and drop their cards in a basket or box. Read each answer out loud and lead a discussion from students' answers.
4. Take two sheets of paper and type a sentence starter on each of them. An example of a sentence starter is "The most important idea I learned from this passage of Scripture is . . ." Have your class members sit in two rows. Pass one sheet down each row and have students write their personal answers to the question coming down their row. Collect the two sheets and read the responses.
5. Put the four key words of your Bible study for the week in large letters across the top of a whiteboard at the front of the classroom. Give each class member four Post-it notes. Ask them to write the way each of these concepts applies to their hearts or lives on their Post-it notes. When everyone has finished writing, have class members place their Post-it notes under the words on the board to which they apply. Read all responses.
6. One week before this class session, ask four class members to serve on a panel to present their answers to a particular section of questions. Give them the questions in advance so they can prepare their responses. During class time, you read the questions and let panel members answer them.
7. An alternate method to having a whole-group discussion on a particular subject such as "consecration" is to place the words "Reasons I should consecrate" in a circle in the middle of a large piece of poster board. Then draw six lines out from the circle like spokes on a bicycle wheel. On another sheet of poster board place the words "Difficulties to consecration" in a circle in the middle. Draw six lines out from the circle as you did before. Divide your class into two groups and have them write responses to these questions on the lines coming from the circle. You, as the group leader, can then read all of the responses at the conclusion of the exercise.
  - a. The most important reason I should consecrate myself to God is . . .
  - b. The most difficult thing about consecrating to God is . . .
8. A good visual aid for the material in a particular lesson can assist in your presentation of it. For example, place each of the five key words describing the Holy Spirit on five large sheets of poster paper. Place one word at the top of each sheet. List the concepts that explain

each word under the key words. Use a different color marker for each key word. Tape these to a chalkboard or on the wall for presentation. You may also do the same thing with a PowerPoint presentation using a computer and projector.

9. Rather than lecturing on the week's material, present the information in the form of the *Jeopardy* television game show. Begin reading characteristics of one of the key concepts. Have students raise their hands when they think they know which one you are talking about. They answer in the form of a question, such as, "What is a bush?" [the thing that caught Moses' attention in the desert].
10. This takes a little extra work, but it brings variety to your presentation. Write 10 questions and answers from your presentation material. Type a question on a note card; type the answer on another note card. Do this 10 times for each question and answer. You may also position the questions and answers in sections on your computer screen, print as many sets as you need onto card stock paper and cut them out. Shuffle the cards and let the Bible study group match the questions with the correct answers. It's more fun to make two sets, divide the class into two groups, and see which group can complete the activity first.

## In the World but Not of It

### Background Check

Read the following sections of material from *Dismantling the Myths* for additional insights into this material. Read about “Godly Virtues” on pages 127-28, “Resident Aliens” on page 136, and living in the world on pages 183-84.

### Preparing for This Study

This study is a lead-in to the theme of this entire book. We are not to simply put in time on this earth while we anxiously await our homeward call to live with God forever. Yes, we are to anxiously await our homeward call. But in the meantime God wants us to actively apply ourselves to the work He has called us to do.

I refer at the bottom of page 9 and first two questions at the top of page 10 to the social causes to which holiness people have involved themselves across the years. I’m thinking particularly of their involvement in causes like slavery, poverty, rights of the disenfranchised, child labor, spouse and child abuse, unwed mothers, prohibition of alcohol, prison reform, drug abuse, abortion, and treatment of the mentally ill. I’m sure your group can think of a much longer list. The Salvation Army has built a solid reputation for more than a century of involvement in social causes.

Question 3 in the middle of page 10 draws attention to how holiness of heart leads naturally to service and ministry. This brings us back to the idea I present later in this study. That is, God does not clean us up and screw our heads on straight so He can place us on His fireplace mantle like a treasured trophy. He cleans us up and screws our heads on straight so He can send us out into a hurting world as agents of healing and help. He comforts us not to make us comfortable but to make us comforters of hurting humanity.

I’ve used the extreme sport analogy throughout this Bible study series. As I read the material at the bottom of page 10 and top of page 11, I’m reminded of the extreme nature of God’s call on our lives to head directly into the firestorm. Jesus warned us that we’d be living and working in sometimes hostile territory. Yet rather than giving us a hiding place from the difficulties or a free pass to avoid them, He called us to live in the midst of them. Questions 2 through 4 on page 11 draw attention to this call. Explore Jesus’ motive for this call with your group and why He would give this kind of direction.

Give particular attention to the comparison at the bottom of page 12 between the light of God’s truth and the bondage of Satan’s lies. Make sure the class members understand the deceptive nature of the glitter and glamour of sinful choices. Call attention to the end result of such choices and how often those results come with sinful choices. My experience in working with people across the years is that the results follow sinful choices 100 percent of the time!

As you think about the questions on page 14, begin by asking why some Christians prefer to withdraw from society in the first place. What may have prompted such withdrawal? What were the benefits of such withdrawal?

As you use the group activity on page 15, you might think of Christian groups who in this current age withdraw from their world and live as a counterculture. Without criticizing them personally, think of the negative results of such a choice in terms of withholding their witness from the world.

Close your session with a group prayer.



## **Salt, Light, Yeast**

### **Preparing for This Study**

Use much of your group time with this Bible study comparing the physical properties and uses for salt, light, and yeast to the spiritual applications each of them have for our lives. The Bible uses these examples many times throughout the Bible to call us to live and act in certain ways as Christians.

Along with the positive features of salt, light, and yeast, the Bible urges us to avoid losing our effectiveness as Christians. Thus, we must think of the ways salt loses its saltiness, light yields to darkness, and yeast ceases to make bread dough rise. From this perspective, explore all the ways this can happen to us as Christians.

Now, brainstorm with your group ways to avoid losing our effectiveness as Christians. This Bible study should call us to be like salt, light, and yeast and also warn us against losing that correlation.

Notice on page 19 the three spheres of influence for light that Jesus mentions in our Bible lesson. Notice how our lights must shine the brightest in our own homes. Why is this so important? Why can our lights not shine brightly in the city or world if they don't shine well at home? Notice how an effective light in the home then spreads to the city. An effective light for the city then spreads to the world. God blesses each level of effectiveness with an ever-increasing range of influence. What does this mean to our spiritual lives and influence?

As you explore the material on pages 20-21, think of all of the conditions that are necessary for bread dough to raise properly. What happens if the timing, temperature, or humidity is not conducive for the yeast to work? Now, make the connection to the spiritual world. The environment must be conducive in the spiritual world as well. What are some of those conditions that need to be conducive for people to be won to the Lord and for believers to mature in their faith? What roles do your class members play to help those conditions become more conducive?

Encourage your class members to think of examples of individual Christians or groups of Christians who work like yeast in their society. What does that say to us?

Close with a season of prayer.

## “Leave the Altar and Report to Work”

### Background Check

Read pages 37-40 and 79-80 in *Breaking Free from Sin's Grip*.

### Preparing for This Study

The paragraphs at the bottom of page 23 point out the difference between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Take time with your group to note how easy it is to discuss theoretical concepts and how much more difficult it is to apply those concepts to our daily lives. Give examples.

After completing the material at the top of page 24 you will have clearly established the difference between the dead sacrifices of the Old Testament and the living sacrifices of the New Testament. Having explored this difference, have your group discuss the advantages of our New Testament worship of God. How is our relationship with God different from the relationship most Old Testament saints had?

Give particular attention to the material at the bottom of page 24 referring to a body dedicated to doing God's will. That's what our Christian faith is all about, isn't it? God purposes to use our dedicated lives for His service. He only needs our availability to make it a reality.

Even though the questions on page 25 are for personal reflection, you may wish to highlight some of them for your group's discussion. Use question 1 to again emphasize the deceptive nature of Satan's offers and how they always lead to addiction and bondage. Question 3 will point students to Christ's example in this regard. He doesn't ask us to do anything He has not done himself.

The questions on page 26 are important because they not only explore the tension between words and deeds but also call your students to find ways to move from good intentions to actions. Allow plenty of time for discussing these questions. Have someone write down the answers to question 4 given by your group. Ask this person to type up the responses, copy them, and pass them out to the group at the next Bible study session. Use this exercise, along with many others through the series, to put practical tools in students' hands for daily application of the concepts discussed in your sessions together.

The group activity on page 27 is another activity that lends itself to having someone write down responses to both questions, type them up, copy them, and pass them out next week. Use every means possible to encourage the movement from good intentions to Christian action.

Close your session with prayer.

## Taking Risks for God

### Background Check

Read chapter 11 in *Breaking Free from Sin's Grip*. Note the 10 things that develop in Christians' lives as they pursue holiness. You might wish to incorporate some of the questions at the end of this chapter into your group discussion.

### Preparing for This Study

The extreme sport theme of this Bible study series works especially well with this session. Participation in extreme sports involves taking risks; so does living for God.

There is a lot of information in the material on page 29. Allow time to discuss all of it with your group. It's important for understanding the parable and for drawing spiritual applications from the parable. Jesus tells us a great deal about the Father's efforts for our salvation in this short story.

Note differences in the story discussed on page 30 from the story we just analyzed. Draw additional spiritual truths from this story.

Use the spiritual insights from these two stories to discuss the many ways God reaches people with His plan of salvation. Think of examples from the lives of people in your church who illustrate these various ways in which God works.

Some class members may wonder why I would use the mind-set of a casino gambler to make this spiritual application. The reason is that even though the gambler's mind-set doesn't give a positive example for acquiring money, it does give a good example of living a life of reckless abandon. The metropolitan area where I live has three riverboat casinos. They advertise on television, radio, and billboards regularly. The people depicted in these ads are all having fun and winning lots of money. The ads suggest that gambling is the road to material prosperity. The problem is, most people lose their money and very few people ever hit the jackpot.

Jesus calls us to this same mind-set of risking everything for God and His cause. But when we heed His call, we're not gambling. Why? Because when He calls us He gives us insight into the laws of the spiritual world that always bless us when we apply them to our lives. Risking everything for God is not really a risk; it's a sure thing!

You may wish to have a group discussion with some of the personal reflection questions on pages 32 and 33.

Close your time together in prayer.

## A Lifestyle of Service

### Preparing for This Study

You may open this study by highlighting the individuals I mention in the introduction, or you probably know people whose commitment to God led them into areas of full-time service. Either way, make the introduction personal by pointing out how these ideas lead to lifestyle choices.

As you discuss the material at the bottom of page 35, remind class members that following Christ does not guarantee a life of ease and pleasure. I sometimes hear people talk in ways that imply believers walk even, straight paths. The danger with their misconception is that when believers actually do go through trials or tough circumstances they may assume they're not where God wants them to be spiritually. What's worse, they may assume God is punishing them. Nothing could be further from the truth. Service to God may actually cause some of the hardships that come our way. Think of ways this may be true.

All of the questions on page 36 are important for group consideration. Allow plenty of time for them. Class members should master each of the concepts highlighted in these questions to properly understand the truths of this Bible study.

The material on page 37 is also very important for a proper understanding of this week's lesson. God may not answer our prayers for Him to remove our difficult circumstances. What do we do then? How do we pray? How do we know God is answering our prayers?

Don't take class time to discuss exactly what Paul's thorn in the flesh might have been. No answer will satisfy everyone, and the Bible doesn't say. That's probably a good thing because it leaves room for the Holy Spirit to remind us of His ability to help us with our thorns even though our thorns may not be exactly the same as Paul's.

Call attention at the bottom of page 37 and the word "torment" from verse 7 that actually means "to crucify." Point out the ways we must crucify the passions and desires of our flesh and our selfish natures. Help students apply this material directly to their lives in practical ways.

Spend time on the questions on page 38. As your group shares the lessons they have learned from their difficult experiences, they will also be encouraging one another to continue to hold on through tough times. Point out that such difficulties do not exempt us from service and ministry. If we wait until everything is going our way, we may never accomplish anything meaningful for God and His work.

Allow time to discuss with your group the paradox at the bottom of page 38. God may actually work best through us when we are the weakest! How can this be? Think of times it has been true in your own life or the lives of friends. Again, encourage class members to take hope in God's provision for them even in the midst of less than ideal circumstances.

Close your session with prayer.

## Keeping a Light Touch

### Preparing for This Study

This week's Bible study deals with a particularly sensitive topic. Almost everyone has an opinion about how many material possessions are too many or about how much money spent on self is too much. The problem is that the Bible does not set a number of material possessions we can own or the number of dollars we can earn or spend before we cross over into excess. Neither does the Bible tell us the make and model car we should drive. That places the burden back on each individual believer to prayerfully discern God's will for his or her life. What's more, we cannot sit in judgment of one another based on our personal conviction but must leave each person with God in this regard.

Group leader, you will need to take particular care with the presentation of this lesson that no member feels singled out for judgment regarding other people's opinion of his or her lifestyle choices, especially with regard to money and what it can buy.

The group activity on page 41 is a bit unusual. Here's why I think it could be useful. People in the church have many misconceptions about what the Bible says about money and material possessions. I can't even count the number of times I've heard 1 Tim. 6:10 misquoted by saying, "Money is the root of all evil." The verse actually says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." There's a big difference! This exercise will give you an opportunity slip in some common misconceptions to see if your class members catch them. Have fun with it.

Your first intentional error might be to say that Jesus asked the rich young man mentioned on page 41 to sell his possessions because Jesus believed it's wrong to own possessions. Go on to say God wants everyone to give all of their possessions away when they follow Him.

Isn't it interesting that when Jesus referenced the Ten Commandments, He failed to reference No. 10 regarding coveting? What might that imply about the young man's problem? You should have an interesting discussion with questions 2 and 3 on page 42. Most people I know think they are going to heaven based on their good works. They think God has a pair of scales on which He places our good deeds on one side and our bad ones on the other. If the good deeds outweigh the bad ones, we go to heaven. You know what they think happens if the reverse is true! Ask your group:

1. Why is this error so common?
2. Why is it so popular?
3. How do you get people to give up their confidence in this error?

All questions on pages 43 and 44 are important, so allow ample time with them. Questions 1, 2, and 5 are particularly important because of the spiritual truths they bring to mind. Isn't Jesus' command to "Come, follow me" the same for all of us? We sometimes feel sorry for the young man. However, God calls us to the same level of reckless abandon of our personal plans for our lives.

Discuss with your group what is meant by the concept on page 44 of “keeping a light touch on our possessions, social status, desires, ambitions, and goals in life.” How does this look in daily life? Why is it important?

Have class members summarize in their own words the spiritual truth of this Bible study. Then ask them the following questions:

1. What is God saying to them from this text?
2. What is the radical nature of Jesus’ call for our lives?
3. Why will this call not be popular with many people?
4. Why is Jesus’ call so radical?
5. What are the benefits of answering Jesus’ call?
6. How is this mind-set like the mind-set of a person participating in an extreme sport?

Close with prayer.

## Investing in the Kingdom

### Background Check

Read chapter 25 in *More Coffee Shop Theology* for details regarding Judgment Day.

### Preparing for This Study

Class members have already read the account of my Uncle Clyde and Aunt Stella by the time they come to the Bible study session. You might ask class members for similar examples of people they know who have the same Christian witness and example. The exact types of benevolence are not the important issue here. What you want to highlight is the heart condition or attitude that motivates such action.

Question 1 on page 49 will give you a chance to explore students' perceptions about Judgment Day. No doubt, all of us are sobered by the thought of divine judgment. However, it should not frighten us. Christ our Savior serves as our Friend and the Holy Spirit as our Advocate while we live on earth. They will hold our hands and see us safely through Judgment Day just as they have seen us through every day of our lives on earth. Dispel student fears of this day by replacing fear with confidence in Christ, the One who sees us through. Remind students that salvation is based on faith in Christ alone—not good works. That's a hard concept for many people to grasp.

Use the material at the bottom of page 49 and the top of page 50 to focus attention on the attitudes and conditions of the heart that please God and result in acts of benevolence toward others. Even though the reflection on page 50 is a personal one, you might ask volunteers to share answers that are not too personal in order to get a flavor of the kinds of things we are talking about in this passage of Scripture.

Take plenty of time with the three discussion questions on page 51. They highlight an important spiritual truth. They also point out the difference between divine and human assessments of performance. We humans tend to be so performance-oriented that we concentrate only on the results. God looks at and judges our hearts and intentions. Here's a brief illustration from my teaching experience. I gave my students this hypothetical situation in class one day and asked for their responses to it. Here's the situation.

Let's say I see a child struggling for life in the middle of the pond on our university campus. I jump in, swim to the child, and attempt to save his life. However, when I drag him to shore, I realize I'm too late. The child has already drowned.

My question is, "Did I do a good deed in attempting to rescue the child?" My class responded, "No. It's only a good deed if you save the child's life." Notice the difference in focus. The answer to the question is no if you are performance-oriented. It is yes if you judge on intentions and efforts.

Emphasize the material at the bottom of page 51 and the top of page 52. Jesus identifies with those in need. That should be an encouragement to everyone who feels needy. It should also help us prioritize our lives to live like Jesus—with the priority of helping those in need.

The group activity on page 52 will give your class members an opportunity to personalize this week's spiritual lesson as they think of ways God wants to work through them as they minister to needy people in their worlds.

Close the session with prayer.



## Your Unconscious Influence

### Background Check

Read chapter 21 in *More Coffee Shop Theology* regarding the influence of our lives.

### Preparing for This Study

We don't talk much about our silent witness, but it makes a powerful statement nonetheless. Everyone in full-time Christian service and their children must acknowledge it to some degree. We sometimes call it "living in the glass house." By that we mean people are watching our lives and how well our conduct matches what we profess. Every minister's child has heard a church member say, "You must not do that; you're the pastor's child."

This lesson reminds us that ministers and their children are not the only ones being watched. Every follower of Jesus Christ is on public display. The emphasis of this Bible lesson is an important reminder.

The narrative and questions on pages 54 and 55 are important. Give particular attention to question 3 on page 55. It will help students a great deal to grasp the importance of simple faith.

The central emphasis of this lesson begins on page 55 as we notice the way the woman watched Jesus' life and ministry for a long time from the shadows. The reflection activity on page 55 is personal. However, find a way to discuss general responses. This question calls attention to the importance of our silent witness.

The words I saw 20 years ago on a plaque convicted me and changed the way I interpreted interruptions. The plaque read: *Your interruptions are your ministry*. That's the truth I'm trying to highlight at the bottom of page 55 and top of page 56. The discussion question on page 56 will help you make this point. Try to help your class members see ministry opportunities in the interruptions of their days.

I don't know about you, but it really helps me to recall that Jesus often lived with stressful situations and an out-of-control schedule. I draw great strength from talking to Jesus about my stress and my schedule. I know He identifies personally with my situation. It's during those hard-pressed times that I must remember my unconscious influence. Even such pressures in life do not give us an excuse to overreact to family members or fellow workers. The pressures give us opportunities to demonstrate an extra measure of God's grace. The three questions on page 57 will help you draw out this important point.

Allow time to present and discuss the material at the bottom of page 57 and top of page 58. I've seen too much human wreckage along the path of ministry as well-meaning laity and ministers pushed themselves too far and experienced burnout. Talk about the proper balance between inflow

and outflow. Christians absolutely must understand this truth. God does not expect our service and ministry to drive us into physical and mental exhaustion. If we go too far, we become of little use to Kingdom ministry. Talk about the importance of pacing oneself.

The group activity on page 58 may seem childish. However, I'm always amazed at how much adults enjoy playing childhood games again. I used Play-Doh in my university classroom one day. Students said the smell of the Play-Doh took them back to their childhoods and reminded them of the fun they used to have with it. Have some fun with this activity.

Close your time together with prayer.

## Offering Deliverance

### Preparing for This Study

When our son Brent was about five years old, we were watching television together. An advertisement appeared on the screen promising total and complete fulfillment in life if I purchased and used a particular product. I'll never forget my son's reaction to the ad. He said, "Don't you believe that, Dad! It's just an advertisement." How quickly they learn. Jesus faced that same skepticism in His ministry.

The questions at the bottom of page 62 not only highlight the ministry of Jesus but also point out the ministry to which He calls us today. The ministry of deliverance begun by Jesus did not end with Jesus' earthly ministry. He intended for it to continue in His followers. The material on page 63 shows how Jesus wants to continue His ministry in us.

Call attention to the ministry activities Jesus emphasized in His sermon. The questions on pages 63 and 64 and the group activity on page 64 continue this line of thinking and should help students see ways they can be involved in a ministry of deliverance.

The conclusion of this lesson offers us an important reminder. We've discussed it before. That is, sometimes our ministry will be welcomed by those who need it most and sometimes it won't. We must go right on lending a hand anyway. I've heard many stories, and I'll bet you have, too, of believers who invited neighbors to church repeatedly. Their invitations were met with rejection and maybe even animosity. But the believers just kept coming back and just kept inviting them to church. Eventually, the Holy Spirit got through to the neighbors. They accepted the 40-11th invitation, attended a church service, gave their hearts to Christ, and became committed followers.

Remind your class members to keep on offering the message of Jesus' deliverance whether their message is well-received or not. Use the questions on page 65 to highlight this important truth.

Close your session with prayer.

## Sharing My Faith

### Preparing for This Study

After working through the introductory material, talk about each of the questions at the bottom of page 67. Discuss possible answers to each of the questions and the essential ingredients of a correct answer for each. Question 2 on page 68 draws attention to the elements that should be included in a personal testimony.

Talk through each of the discussion questions on pages 68 and 69. These questions point to important qualities of a good testimony. Especially emphasize the ministry of the Holy Spirit working through us to make our testimonies effective.

The material in the middle of page 69 regarding a clear conscience and a transparent life remind us of our unconscious influence, which we studied two lessons ago. You can't overemphasize the importance of a clear conscience. I know so many stories, and I'm sure you do, too, of people who talked and acted one way at church and another way at home, work, or in private life. Recently, a good friend of mine from college admitted to living a double life of deep sin while working in the church for the past 15 years. A double life may not be discovered tomorrow or next week, but God always finds a way of exposing such dishonesty. Encourage class members to take Peter's admonition about a clear conscience seriously.

The discussion questions at the bottom of page 69 and top of page 70 give you an opportunity to explain why a clear conscience is important. Encourage your class members to point out the reasons that it is the best way to live.

Study the simple testimony of the healed man discussed on page 70. Think about these questions along with the ones on page 71.

1. What made his simple testimony so powerful?
2. What do we learn from him about how we should testify?
3. How does his example take the mystery and fear out of witnessing to others about our faith?

The final group activity is an important one. It will give class members an opportunity to write out and practice giving their own personal testimonies. Encourage each of them to his or her story with a friend this week.

Close your session in prayer.

## Making Disciples

### Preparing for This Study

Especially after having worked your way through book 3 of this Bible study series, what does the statement in question 1 on page 73 mean to you and your group? I'm reminded every time our pastor dedicates a baby at church that every member of my local congregation has a responsibility to nurture that child in the Christian faith as he or she grows up. That means everything from teaching a Sunday School class, to volunteering to work in children's programs, to living a good example.

In that same way, I am also responsible to nurture new converts into the Christian faith. We don't just lead people to Christ then leave them to their own initiative to grow into strong Christians. Newborn infants need lots of personal care and attention; so do new converts. Growth in children takes time; so does spiritual growth of new converts. At some point in the discussion, relate these comparisons between raising children and nurturing new converts in the Christian faith.

Question 1 at the bottom of page 74 may raise some eyebrows. The challenging phrase in the question is "for the first time." Yes, it is true that Jesus' disciples stated several times during His earthly ministry that they believed He was the Messiah. Yet every time that belief was put to the test, they doubted and backed down—at least in their actions and body language. Especially during the passion of Christ, we see His disciples shying away from Him and doubting His divinity to the extent that they were "fair weather" disciples. But, the resurrection of Christ changed all of that. So here, *for the first time*, they truly worship Him as God and really believe it. By the way, I think His resurrection is the answer to this question!

The answer to question 2 on page 74 is extremely important. We are often tempted to draw back from ministry when our efforts are criticized. I've learned to keep right on at the task in the midst of criticism. This passage of Scripture reminds me that Jesus was criticized too, but the criticism didn't stop His ministry. We must not let it stop ours.

The personal reflection exercise focuses on God's new contract with us. Encourage class members to share what it means to them to have God enter this new contract with them.

Talk at length about the material on pages 75 and 76. This is an extremely important message of this entire Bible study book. You might talk a bit about class members knowing their spiritual gifts. This may call for them to take a spiritual gifts inventory. Talk to your pastor about administering such an exercise to your group. Every believer needs to know what gifts he or she has received from God in order to maximize their uses in personal ministry.

As I look at the material on pages 77 and 78, I'm reminded of the extreme sport theme of this Bible study series. Jesus sits down with eleven of His disciples and challenges them to take the world for God. How extreme is that! Imagine this small band of followers taking on the Jewish religious sys-

tem and the entire Roman Empire. But, they did. And in about 300 years Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire.

So, how did they do it? With a great strategy or some super committee meetings? No. Christianity grew in the early days and continues to grow and prosper in our day because the work of the Holy Spirit brings the presence of the living Christ just as He promised in this week's scripture. Christ works through us to enlarge His kingdom on this earth.

Use the group activity on page 78 to encourage class members to recognize why each of Jesus' commands is important. Then talk about ways they can apply these commands to their own personal ministries.

Close the session with prayer.

## **Tying It All Together**

### **Preparing for This Study**

This is wrap-up time. If you have missed a week of study in the last three months, try to tie things together in one session. If you were able to meet each week, you then have the time to take two weeks with this material.

It's possible that the material in this Bible study raised many questions that need plenty of time to answer. Check your Odds and Ends box. This is the time to address those lingering questions. As I said in this guide at the end of books 1, 2, and 3, it's better to take a little extra time now than to leave haunting questions still lingering in your students' minds.

This study gives you a chance to do a quick review of some of the most significant Scripture passages encountered over the past 11 weeks. Review the material, discuss the questions presented in this week's material, and answer student questions from the past 11 weeks. That should fill your time together easily.

After you have reviewed and clarified the material and all questions that students have raised, do the group activity found at the bottom of page 84 and on page 85. This is an important wrap-up exercise.

Since this is the last book in this Bible study series, there's no "Moving On" section as we had in the previous three books. I trust this has been a helpful time in God's Word for you and for your group. I also hope that this study series will encourage class members to continue to explore God's Word for more information about His plan of holiness for our lives. Believe it or not, there's still a lot more about holiness than we've studied in this small four-book series. Encourage class members to make this a lifelong study.

Blessings on you and your group. Thanks for taking this journey of discovery with me. Isn't God and His plan for our lives amazing? Praise His name forever!

As always, close your session with prayer.