

STEADFAST *and* STABLE

the biblical foundation for your faith • Monte Leavell

LEADER'S GUIDE & ANSWER KEY

Small-group discussion is one of the most effective means for helping people think through the personal implications of Scripture. All participants should have a copy of *Steadfast and Stable*, so they can read through the material before each session (including all the Scripture verses or passages mentioned) and answer the questions. Encourage them to write down any other Bible questions they have as they do this. Be sure to allow an opportunity during or after the discussion time for them to bring up such questions.

Remember the following guidelines as you facilitate group discussion:*

1. Small-group discussion is most productive when there are ten or fewer participants and when the participants are arranged in a circle rather than in rows. Each person can then make eye contact with everyone else in the group.
2. A good way to begin the conversation is by asking group members to relate to the group one of the most significant statements they read in the material for that session. Then ask them to explain briefly why it was important to them. This is where some of the greatest benefits of the group time will come—as believers share with each other what God is doing in their lives (1 John 1:3). A participant hearing someone share the same principle that God has taught him can be greatly encouraged that God is working in his life and that he's on the right track.
3. Work through the numbered questions in order, asking a different participant to answer each question. If someone indicates that he had trouble with a particular question, ask other group members what they put down for an answer and why.
4. Carefully guide the flow of the discussion. You shouldn't dominate the conversation, but you must motivate group members by restating contributions made, expressing appreciation for all input, and asking follow-up questions. If the discussion gets sidetracked, you will need to refocus it tactfully. You may also need to keep dominant group members from monopolizing the discussion, or you may need to privately encourage quiet participants to become involved.

In this guide suggested answers are shown in italics. In many cases, there are other correct responses to a question. Always encourage group members to base their answers on what the Bible itself says. The answers are provided for your convenience as group leader, but you should prayerfully read through all the Scripture passages ahead of time to be able to effectively guide the discussion and to correct any misconceptions that may be expressed. An asterisk beside a question number indicates that there's a related follow-up question for you to ask the group if you think it would be helpful.

*These guidelines are adapted from Jim Berg's *Created for His Glory* leader's guide, available from JourneyForth, <http://www.createdforhisglory.com/resources.htm>.

SESSION 1

A LOVE-BASED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Main point of this session: Before we came to faith in Christ, we were separated from God and had no hope.

Matthew 7:24–27 (p. 2)

1. What two men are described here? *a wise man and a foolish man*
2. What materials did they use for their foundations? *rock or sand*
3. The house built on the solid rock is a picture of a life built on whom? *Jesus Christ*
4. The house built on the sand is a picture of a life built on what? *power, money, fame, pleasure, or anything that replaces Jesus Christ*
5. To have a solid, stable life, we must base our lives on whom? *Jesus Christ*

Romans 3:10–23 (p. 4)

6. How many people are righteous? (3:10) *none*
7. Several characteristics of the unsaved person are mentioned in 3:10–18. List some of them here. *unrighteous, without understanding, does not seek God, worthless, does not do good, deceptive, ungodly speech, bitter, violent, causes destruction and bitterness, does not know peace, has no fear of God*
8. How many people in the world are guilty before God? (3:19) *all of them*
- *9. What knowledge does the law of God bring to humans? (3:20) *that they have sinned*
10. God's righteousness is available to all those who do what? (3:22) *believe*
- *11. How many have sinned? (3:23) *all*

Additional characteristics of an unsaved person (p. 6)

12. **Romans 5:6–10** *without strength / weak / helpless*
13. **John 8:44** *belongs to the devil and does what the devil wants*
14. **Ephesians 2:1–3** *dead in sins, worldly, under the power of Satan, fulfills desires of the flesh and of the mind, under the wrath of God*
15. **Ephesians 2:12–13** *without Christ, excluded from the people of God and the promises, no hope, without God*
16. **Isaiah 64:6–7** *unclean, temporary, does not call on God or take hold of Him, under the power of sin*

*See the follow-up questions.

Follow-up questions

9. What was the purpose of the Old Testament law? *to show people that apart from faith in Christ they cannot obey God perfectly (Gal. 3:23–26)*
11. Are we all just as sinful as murderers and rapists? Aren't some sins worse than others? *There are degrees of sin; God prescribes greater punishment for sins that are more serious. Hating your neighbor is wrong, but murdering him would certainly be a greater sin. But any sin, no matter how small it seems to us, is enough to separate us from God.*

Scriptures for further study: Matthew 15:19; James 2:10–11; 1 John 2:15–17; 3:1; Colossians 1:19–23

SESSION 2

ACCEPTING THE GIFT FROM GOD

Main point of this session: By trusting Christ we receive His gift of salvation and begin a new love-based relationship with God.

Romans 5:8 (p. 9)

1. What is the description of mankind in this verse? *sinners*
2. While we were in that condition, what did God do for us? *He showed us His love.*
3. How does God demonstrate His love for us? *by the death of His Son Jesus Christ*

1 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:3–7 (p. 10)

4. Why did Christ die? *to bring us into right relationship with God*
5. What two events followed His death? *His burial and resurrection*
6. Many people saw Jesus after He rose from the dead. What is the largest number given? *five hundred*

John 16:7–11 (p. 12)

7. The Comforter is another name for the Holy Spirit. When did Jesus say the Comforter would come? *after Jesus went away*
8. In what three areas does the Holy Spirit reprove (convict or convince) mankind? *sin, righteousness, and judgment*
9. Why does He convict of sin or impress a person with the guilt of his or her sin? *because that person does not believe in Jesus*

Romans 10:9–15 (p. 13)

10. According to 10:9, what two things does a person need to do to be saved? *confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in his heart that God raised Him from the dead*
11. According to 10:10, what part does the heart play? *With the heart a person believes.*
12. According to 10:10, what part does the mouth play? *With the mouth a person confesses.*
13. Who can call on the Lord for salvation? (10:11–13) *anyone*
14. Is any distinction made based on how much sin a person has committed? *no*

Follow-up question

14. **Why does the passage mention that Jews and Greeks are no different?** *It doesn't matter whether a person has been religious (like the Jews, God's chosen people) or unbelieving (like the Greeks, who worshiped many gods but not the one true God), all are invited to call on the name of the Lord.*

Scriptures for further study: John 14:16–17; Matthew 10:32; Ephesians 2:4–10

SESSION 3

BENEFITS OF A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Main point of this session: in Christ we are new men and women with a whole new future as part of God's family.

John 14:1–6 (p. 18)

1. Who is talking in 14:1? *Jesus*
2. What will Jesus do where He is going? He's preparing a place for His followers.
3. Someday, Jesus will come again and take us to be with Him. Where will He take us? *His Father's house (heaven)*
4. Who did not understand the way? *Thomas and the rest of the disciples*
5. What three things did Jesus say He is in 14:6? *(a) the way, (b) the truth, and (c) the life*
6. Is there any other way to get into heaven? *No, Jesus said we must come to the Father through Him.*
7. What is the destiny of each person who has Jesus Christ as Savior? *to live with God for eternity*

John 16:7–16 (pp. 19–20)

8. The Holy Spirit convicts or reproves the world of what three things? (16:8–11) *(a) sin, (b) righteousness, and (c) judgment*
9. Does the Holy Spirit ever draw attention to Himself? (16:13–14) *no*
10. If not, who does He focus our attention on? *Jesus*
11. Where will He guide the believer? *into all truth*
12. Who will the Holy Spirit glorify? *He will always glorify Christ.*

Ephesians 2:19 (pp. 21–22)

13. What were we before we were saved? *strangers, aliens, foreigners, outsiders*
14. After we are saved, what are we? *fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's family or household*

Scriptures for further study: John 6:63–64; 1 Corinthians 3:16–23; 1 John 3:1–3

To learn more about what it means to be “in Christ,” read Ephesians 1, and underline that phrase and equivalent expressions. You should find about a dozen. There are a half-dozen more in Ephesians 2.

SESSION 4

SECURITY AND STABILITY

Main point of this session: Christ's perfect life and death on our behalf justify us, providing a security that nothing can destroy.

Hebrews 10:8–14 (pp. 25–26)

- *1. Did God take pleasure in the offerings and sacrifices? (10:8) *no*
- *2. God said He would take away what? (10:9) *the system of offerings and sacrifices established by the Old Testament law*
3. What would He establish? (10:9) *obedience to God's will*
4. According to 10:11, could the priest who offered the sacrifices take away sins? *no*
5. Can our sacrifices take away sin today? *no*
6. Whose sacrifice can take away sin? *Christ's*
7. How many times did Jesus need to die to take away all sin? (10:10, 14) *one time*

*See the follow-up questions.

- *8. All who accept Christ's offer of salvation are sanctified (made perfect or clean). How long are we perfect before God? (10:14) *forever*

Insights about security (p. 30)

9. **John 10:25–30** *Jesus knows us if we are His followers. He gives us life that will never end and that no one can take away. We are safe in His hand because the Father gave us to Jesus. We are safe in the Father's hand because no one is greater than God.*
10. **Ephesians 1:13; 4:30** *The Holy Spirit seals us, which means that He preserves us and protects us until we receive our inheritance (1:14).*
11. **1 Peter 1:2–5** *God knew us before He chose us and now sanctifies us by the Spirit. Through Christ's resurrection we have been born again to a living hope. We have an inheritance that is permanent (imperishable), perfect (undefiled), and personal (reserved in heaven for us).*

Follow-up questions

1. If sacrifices and offerings weren't pleasing to God, why did He command people in the Old Testament to bring them? *God didn't establish the Old Testament way of worship so that people could please Him by sacrificing animals; those sacrifices couldn't take away sin. They were to point people to Christ, whose perfect sacrifice would satisfy God's wrath by paying the penalty for mankind's sin.*
2. Does this mean Christians don't have to obey the Old Testament law? *Christ's death on the cross did away with certain aspects of the Old Testament law. New Testament believers are not required to be circumcised or to follow Jewish customs (Acts 15:1-11). Believers are, however, required to love God and others (Matt. 22:37–40). The laws of the Old Testament help believers understand what it means to obey these commands in the daily decisions of life (Matt. 5:17–20).*
8. If we're perfect before God forever, why do we still sin? *Hebrews 10:14 is talking about our position in relationship to God: Christ has perfected us, and that will never change (positional sanctification). The way we live that out in our daily lives is a growth process: sometimes we choose to sin and need to ask forgiveness, but we should be becoming more like Christ as time goes by (progressive sanctification).*

Scriptures for further study: 1 John 2:1–6

SESSION 5

LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

Main point of this session: Christ's perfect love for us means He accepts us and want to have a continuing relationship with us.

Romans 5:8; John 15:12–13 (p. 33)

1. Is there any greater love than laying down your life for someone else? *no*
2. What did Jesus do to show His love for us? *He died for us even though we were sinners.*

1 Corinthians 13:1–8 (pp. 34–35)

3. What aspect of life does 13:1 describe? *important things we say (speech)*
4. What aspect of life does 13:2 describe? *great things we know and believe (spirituality)*
5. What aspect of life does 13:3 describe? *good things we do for other people (service)*
6. What profit is there without love in these three areas? *none at all*

Optional discussion questions

- Why do you think some of the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13 are described negatively? *to help us be more aware of how unloving we sometimes are*
- From the list in this passage, explain one aspect of love that describes how God relates to you personally.
- What does it mean to say that God loves us unconditionally (p. 37)? *He initiates a love-based relationship with us in spite of our previous rejection of Him; He doesn't require us to somehow earn or deserve His love.*
- If a person truly believes that God will never reject him, will he be more likely or less likely to deliberately choose to engage in sinful behaviors? Why? *As it says on page 37, "The more we understand God's love, the greater our motivation will be to love Him back. We will want to please God by worshiping Him and serving others."*

Scriptures for further study: Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 1:4–5

SESSION 6

GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Main point of this session: Growing in faith involves learning to trust Christ more through studying Scripture and praying.

James 4:8 (p. 41)

1. How do we move closer to God? *This verse mentions cleansing our hands (right behavior) and purifying our hearts (right attitudes), but the context (4:6–7) indicates that to receive God’s grace (i.e., to draw near to Him), we must first humble ourselves and submit to Him.*

Romans 10:17 (pp. 42–43)

2. How does faith come? *by hearing*
3. What is heard? *the word of Christ, the gospel*
4. Is God’s Word important in bringing faith in Him? *Not just important, it is essential!*

2 Timothy 2:15 (p. 43)

5. Do we need to be ashamed? Why or why not? *not if we handle the Word of God properly (see 1:12)*
6. Is it important that we correctly study the Word? *Yes, we should be diligent and accurate.*
7. Are there some who do not study the Word correctly? *Yes, the next verse mentions those whose meaningless words lead others astray (2:16).*

Proverbs 3:5–6 (p. 45)

8. There are three things to do or not to do in these verses. What are they?
 - (a) *Trust God with all your heart.*
 - (b) *Don’t depend on your own thoughts.*
 - (c) *Be aware of God in everything you do.*
9. Do we understand things the same way God does? *No, Scripture says His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8).*
10. What does God promise to do? *to guide us*

Romans 12:1–2 (p. 46)

11. What are we to present to God? *our bodies*
12. Why is this a good thing for us to do? *It’s an act of spiritual worship.*

13. What two things are we told to do in the first part of 12:2? (a) *to not be like the world around us and* (b) *to be totally changed by renewing our minds*
14. What are the three characteristics of God's will? *It's good, acceptable, and perfect.*

John 15:1–6 (p. 48)

15. Who is the true vine? *Jesus*
16. Who is the person who tends the vine? *God the Father*
- *17. The purpose of this passage is to show the fruit of abiding. Branches that abide bear fruit. Who do these branches represent? *The fruitful branches represent true believers who abide in Christ.*
18. According to 15:4–5, can we bear fruit without abiding in Christ? *No, in fact, we can't do anything.*

Insights about prayer (p. 50)

19. **Ephesians 6:18** *Prayer should include both worshipping God (praise) and asking for what we need (petition). We should pray at all times. We should pray diligently and persistently. We should pray for all our fellow believers.*
20. **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18** *We should never stop praying. We should pray with joy and thankfulness regardless of our circumstances. This is the way God wants us to pray.*
21. **1 Peter 5:7** *Since God loves us, we can take all our worries to Him through prayer.*

Follow-up question

17. If the branches represent Christians, why does 15:6 talk about withered branches that are thrown away and burned? *While there are different opinions about what Jesus meant, one explanation is that there are three kinds of branches in this analogy—(a) those that are “in Christ” but not currently bearing fruit (15:2) and that the Father lifts up (an alternate translation for takes away), (b) fruit-bearing branches that He prunes so they will be more fruitful (15:2), and (c) withered branches that never were really “in Christ” and so undergo judgment (15:6). In any case, the most important thing to learn from this passage is that believers need to abide in Christ to bear fruit because without Him we can do nothing.*

Scriptures for further study: 1 Peter 2:1–5

*See the follow-up questions.

SESSION 7

MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Main point of this session: Following Christ is not a solitary exercise but a corporate activity in which every believer benefits from and serves in a local church.

1 Corinthians 11:20–34 (p. 53)

1. Was the church doing more than celebrating the Lord's Supper? *They were having a full meal.*
2. Did they share their meals with each other? *They were behaving selfishly. Some had more than enough to eat while others went hungry.*
3. Who gave the instructions for observing Communion? (11:23) *the Lord Jesus*
4. What does the bread at the Lord's Supper represent? (11:24) *Christ's body*
5. What does the cup represent when we take Communion? (11:25) *Christ's blood*
6. The Lord's Supper is done "in remembrance" (11:24–25). What are we to remember? *Jesus and His death for us on the cross*

Romans 6:3–5 (p. 55)

7. What historical events does baptism picture? *the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus*
8. What two spiritual realities in the life of a believer does baptism represent? *that in Christ he has died to sin and that by the Spirit he has been given the power to live a new life*

Hebrews 10:24–25 (p. 57)

9. What are we to provoke or stimulate other believers to do? *to love and to do good deeds*
10. Should Christians meet together? *Yes, we should assemble for worship.*
11. What is the duty of every Christian (10:25)? *to encourage other believers*

Scriptures for further study: Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27