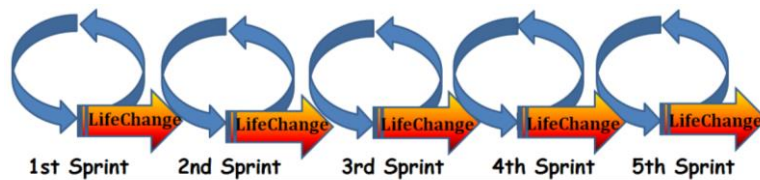
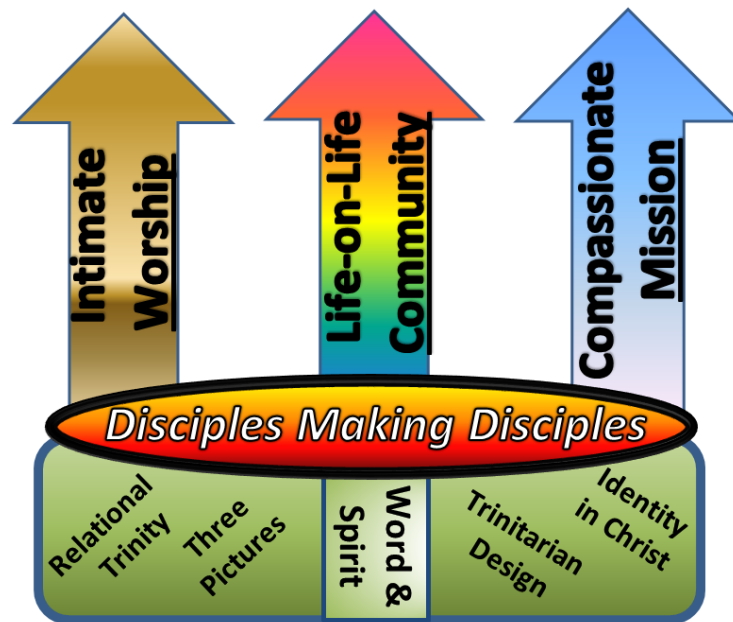


Ten OT

Biographies

Standing on the Shoulders of our Forefathers



5-Week "SPRINT"

Website: JimFredericks.com

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. Some helpful resources for a more detail into God's BIG-STORY are: *From Creation to the Cross* by Albert H. Baylis and *The Story of the Old Testament* by David Talley.

For ***Level II*** personal engagement, I also wrote a number of 5-week booklet as read-alongs to expand our thinking and doing, all available as either free downloads at **JimFredericks.com**, under *Bible Resources*, *Freder's Favorites*, or for a low price on Amazon.com, either paperback or Kindle.

I have also written other resources to support you as companions on your journey with Jesus. These are available at **JimFredericks.com**, including other "*sprints*." These companions outfit God's people to learn and grow from direct access to God's Word studied and applied in an active learning group as we partner with the Spirit and with one another. At the end of this booklet are some other foundational "*sprints*."

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The “*Sprint*” Approach to LifeChange

Group members:

I call these “*sprints*” because they release “quick hit” learning from God’s Love-Letter to us. “*Sprints*” begin the lifelong process to get these key books of the Bible “*under our belts.*” A year is now fifty-two weekly “*sprints*” toward LifeChange.

“*Sprints*” uniquely incorporate innovative learning theory to actively implant Scripture into our lives in small group settings. Each week is designed to blend *relational*, *biblical* and *intentional* responses (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7) for LifeChange as we activate truth by practicing what we are learning. Each “*sprint*” is a powerful, simple, easy-to-use process for building deep relationships around Scripture with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with other group members.

This “*whole-person*” approach involves our inquisitive minds and our enlivened affections triggered by our sanctified imagination. Together these birth healthy choices that activate truth in and through us through our will. Such a “*learning soil*” aligns with our innate ability to learn creatively and so releases flourishing LifeChange.

I offer **two-levels** of engagement to learners, depending on time and desire to invest, and what we want out of our time. **Level I:** Engage how you are able, doing only the “*sprint.*” **Level II:** Add to the “*sprint*” the small amount of targeted reading notated on the previous page to accelerate and deepen your understanding of the passages.

My desire is “*not to simply give you a fish but to teach you to fish.*” To this end, I encourage each of you to aim to read (or listen to) the passage daily prior to the weekly meeting. Developing good habits that work for us form quicker with daily, incremental choices than with hit and miss. “*God has not hidden truth **from** us, but **for** us to increase our delight in Him.*” Our Resident Teacher, the Spirit of God, partners with us to release life through active learning, if we give Him the chance.

Group Leaders:

As a coach, I designed each “*Sprint*” as a highly flexible way to look at Scripture, yet with sufficient structure to release life through the uniqueness and creativity resident within each of God’s masterpieces (Ephesians 2:10). As group leaders, each of us create one-of-a-kind groups since we all access the same passages through our unique journey. This flexible structure frees you as the teacher to concentrate on releasing the God-given singularity of life in the Spirit within each image-bearer in your group. In this way, we prepare each for every good work God has for them (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 1:28-29).

You may print this “*sprint*” as a “booklet,” front and back. However, until the group has experienced the power released in this type of learning, my preference is to print one *Debrief* page with the *S-T-U-D-Y* sheet front-&-back on one sheet each week. This is less of a hurdle for those who have not previously studied Scripture regularly. Hand it out the week before as the passage to study. This one-sheet format adds to the informality and lowers the barrier for those who may come for the first time.

Envision by encouraging each to keep their completed sheets in a folder so “*when **you** do this with others, you can add to what you have already discovered.*” Sow the idea to multiply into those you work with like seed since the “*sprint*” format accelerates multiplication of group leaders. You are helping those in the group grow and also looking to multiply others who grow around the Bible with these “*sprints.*” Doing this with others is something within the reach of most every Christian, not only the specially trained.

Jim Fredericks
Yorba Linda, CA

A Lens to Understand the OT

“How can I ever understand the Old Testament (OT), 100’s of pages written a long time ago to a people very different than today?” Here are three simple tips.

First, Jesus provides our **primary** lens. Jesus said the OT speaks of Him (John 8:56; Luke 24:44-49). Of course, not every detail. The **BIG-STORY** of the OT is like a signpost pointing to the one, unique God Himself as the lead character, even when behind the scenes (like in Esther). The historical portion of the OT is a collection of biographies of real people like us, all merging into and moving forward to explain the OT **BIG-STORY** with God as the Hero. The stories are harmonies, blending and progressively building into a crescendo of the most perfect music pointing to Jesus, the better Way (see 2 Cor. 3:7-11, three-fold “*how much greater*”). Approach the OT with the heart: “*We would see Jesus!*”

Second, view the **BIG-STORY** in the OT like good parents progressively train up their much loved child. What good human father doesn’t yearn to prepare our children over time for their best? A good father lovingly follows through on consequences of disobedience to train (Heb. 12:5-11). A good father also protects his child from damaging influences. *Viewed as a whole*, God’s people in the OT are a willful child, demanding a firm Father’s touch to release their highest destiny, even when He is misunderstood. Individual stories though reflect relationship that leans into God in heart-obedience, like the “remnant,” and individuals like Abraham (God’s friend) and David (the man after God’s heart).

Third, Paul clearly states in 1 Corinthians 10:6+11 that the OT provides us with **examples** as warnings so we will not set our hearts on our idols (see also 1 John 5:21 in *NLT*). The OT comes alive when we imaginatively put ourselves into the stories, feel God’s joy and grief, and measure our responses today against theirs. God begins by calling His people to a wholehearted allegiance to Him through obedience. He draws His people progressively on, providing for any failure! So what does God lay into our lives as His child? In short, everything necessary to prepare His unique child for success in life (Prov. 22:6). Here are three.

1. Enjoying our Father’s Relationship: The Lord walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden before sin since He designed us for intimacy with Him. His “*with you*” presence is the central aspect of the **BIG-STORY** in the OT. Nothing is more crucial to learn in childhood than to enjoy relationship with our Father. The repeated “*that they may know ...*” demonstrates God’s yearning heart towards His people. In the OT, God related with His people in two primary ways. Through care from the good Father and through conquering together with the great King as they battled. God’s people learned whose and who they are, their identity as *a child of their good Father and a servant/warrior of their great, sovereign King*. God invites His people to seek His face.
2. Obedying God: Covenants are an important aspect of the OT. They have both “*blessing*” and “*consequence*” portions, depending on our response. Obedience to and honor of the covenant Giver are essential. We are responsible (“response-able”), consequence-based training. Joyful obedience in every detail is for our own wellbeing, putting us in a position to be blessed. God related with people in the perfect Garden, as individuals (Gen. 4-11), as Family (Gen. 12 & on), as covenant people (Exodus 20f), and as Kingdom people (1 Samuel 8f). Each one ended with *God’s people turning away from God in disobedience*, showing their need for Jesus as Sin-Bearer (Rom. 3:19-20). When His people wholeheartedly returned from their sin (Deut. 30:2), God forgave, delivering them over and again. On what basis? His covenant faithfulness and sin-provision through blood-sacrifice. Note the

first sacrifice in Genesis 3:15, and the many altars for blood-sacrifice, all pointing to Jesus as the Sin-Bearer, God's provision for mankind's sin.

3. **Honoring God:** With obedience and honor, Paul ties together two essential responses for children, "*fire issues*" that must be disciplined if our children are to mature (Eph. 6:1-2). To honor is to highly esteem, value, and respect a person. Children must learn to respect authority, and God is our highest authority. For our highest and best, our Father longs for us to respond with all-in, wholehearted allegiance to His unique family values, whether we agree or not. For **our** own good, God requires honor from His creation, which then releases the good things we now vainly chase.

Keep the **BIG-STORY** center-stage as you read rapidly through the historical sections of the OT. As a good Father and a great King, God progressively moves His people towards a fuller, more accurate view of three core questions.

- "What is God like?" (study the Names of God in the OT sometime).
- "How does this God see and know me?"
- "How does God see the world with its contrary values?"

The question may arise: "*Since the relational Trinity is so clear in the NT, why do we not see this central truth more clearly in the OT?*" In the OT culture, any plurality in the Godhead would have tapped into the societal pull of adding any new god to their existing gods, raw idolatry. So first God laid down the sure foundation to Israel that He was the one, true God, the one and only (Deut. 6:4), just like children progressively get to know parents. God also provides enough glimpses of His Trinitarian presence so we expand our view **after** we see Jesus' blazing NT revelation of the Godhead (Heb. 1:1-3). God patiently trained His people to seek His face above all else as our best, just like the NT lays this in our lives in the "*dear children*" stage of NT growth (Gal. 3:23-24 NASB). What key aspects of God's character does the OT repeatedly teach for our spiritual health?

1. **God's Relational Presence:** Before the Fall, God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. In His presence, His children learn who He is through leisurely times of relating. Notice in each of the ten bios how crucial God's "*with you*" presence is to their success and growth.
2. **God's Good Lovingkindness:** The OT rings with the refrain "*He is good; his [lovingkindness (NASB)] toward Israel endures forever.*" The Psalmist urges us not to forget all God's benefits. He crowns us with love and compassion, and satisfies our desires with good things (Ps 103:2-5).
3. **God's Great Faithfulness:** What an amazing fidelity God has towards His people, even when we spiral down in the oft repeated 5-fold cycle of disobedience (*satisfaction* resting in Him, *sin, servitude, supplication, salvation* to again rest in Him, repeated seven times in Judges). God is sovereign, unrivaled by any human or demonic power. He does what He wants, when He wants, how He wants. Yet always towards our highest and best, even when we are blind to His caring heart (Psalm 91:4).
4. **God's Generous Blessings:** God poured out His blessings when Israel's heart was inclined toward Him. The necessary negative consequences are equally important because of covenant relationship when they rebelled, refusing to turn their hearts back to Him (Ezra 8:22b). This is not petty. God's commandments tell us what is good and His prohibition, what is harmful.

Read these ten OT bios with the idea in mind of God's process of progressive child training for the highest and best of the child. Then we will avoid many passages that trip up others. The OT is God's **BIG-STORY** pointing to God's Son, Jesus Christ, through these smaller stories. OT saints were people of their times, just as we are. So further revelation for them into the depths of God's character must wait for Jesus to clearly reveal His Father (Heb. 1:1-3; Jn 1:18).


S-T-U-D-Y ADAM: Focus Passage: Genesis 3 Extended Reading: Genesis 1-11

God inspired Bible writers to give us a series of named people who loved and quarreled, believed and doubted. We discover ourselves as **we** learn vicariously through the lives of others (1 Cor. 10:6+11). Be sure to answer His call.


In chapter 1, God set the stage by displaying key aspects of His character through what He created. God is good (“*good*” each day) and great (repeated “*God said...and it was so*”). When I look at the vast variety in creation, I understand that God is also generous in the outpouring of His creative blessings. God chose to create mankind. No one twisted His arm. God delights in the crown-jewel of His creation, fashioned for *intimacy* with God (image, likeness so can connect) and for *impact* with Him in the world (rule by caring for others, 1:26-28).

Since God is a good Father who desires to train up His children for their highest and best, He exercises “consequence-based” training. In the OT, these are commonly called “*covenants*” with blessing and consequences for disobedience. God created humanity in **His** image and likeness with just one *don't* and with vast freedom (2:16-17). Because of Adam's disobedience, every person since has been born into **Adam's** shattered likeness and image (cp 1:26 with those now born, 5:2-3). God created us to experience the freedom of His relational presence, walking with them in the Garden. Eve, then next Adam, chose to rebel...with dire consequences. They instantly experienced death, spiritual death of separation from God. Sadly, the defining event of Adam's life was his rebellious disobedience leading to the Fall of humanity and all of creation.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *God the Father, Son and Spirit always lived in satisfying relationship with each other for all eternity past. Why create since they were so satisfied? In short, love must give itself away. So this Family-of-Three created image-bearers as much like God as created beings could be. Now God's initiating first-love could be poured out toward His image-bearers, receiving and giving love.*

5. How did Satan, disguised as a serpent, deceive Eve (3:1-6).
6. What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's choice to rebel (3:14-19)?
7. 3:21 is the first physical death. God's provision for sin in His covenant is always a blood-sacrifice. What do you think 3:21 points to?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** *What follows Genesis 3 is a sickening description of the spread of sin throughout the earth. God's image-bearers were constitutionally changed at their core through Adam's sin. Compare Genesis 1:26-28 with 5:1-2. Humanity is now born into the fallen likeness and image of Adam (Cp Rom. 5:15-19).*

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

- For what are you most grateful or thankful *today* or this week?
- Read the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses per person.
- Debrief insights & responses from S-T-U-D-Y for the passage above.
- PRAY & MINISTER to each other, emphasizing truth from this passage.

STUDY

"For Ezra had set his heart to **study** the law of the Lord, and to **practice** it, and to **teach** His statutes and ordinances in Isreal" (Ezra 7:10, NASB).

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SUMMARY: What's the "big-picture" idea? Trace the flow.

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U

UPLIFTS: What leaps out like a neon (touching mind and/or affections)?
How does this passage help you appreciate God more?

D

DIFFICULTIES: What puzzles me from this passage ("*Deut. 29:29 Bucket*")?

Y


YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?

S-T-U-D-Y ABRAHAM: Focus Passage: Genesis 22 Extended Reading: Genesis 12-25:18


Abraham (name changed from Abram) is a man of contrasts, like we often are. A great man of faith (he made the NT Hall of Fame, Hebrews 11:8-19). The first time we know that God communicated with Abram, He told him to take all his household and travel to a land he did not know. Abram said “yes, Sir” and left. This all-in obedience honored God and characterized Abraham’s life. Abraham also worshipped God, repeatedly building an altar for the blood-sacrifice God required to cover sins (pointing forward to Jesus). He was quick to forbear, to protect those under his care, and willing to wrestle with God, so often that he is called “*the friend of God.*”

Born into the fallen image of Adam, his shadow side also reared its ugly head. Two times he threw his wife, Sarah, under the bus in order to protect *himself*. Because of His great faithfulness, God protected Sarah each time, and even blessed Abraham. God’s presence and initiating first-love held Abraham’s life together. Mark how many times God initiated to communicate with Abraham and to bless him. The crowning event of Abraham’s life was his willingness to sacrifice his son of promise on the altar in response to God’s request (Gen. 22). As with Adam and Eve, the Lord is still after intimacy out of all-in allegiance.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *Because of God’s great love, He is serious about wholehearted allegiance since this is for our best. The Fall of all creation through Adam’s rebellion set in motion the three major events in chapters 4-11, Cain’s life, the worldwide flood and confusing of languages at Babel. God related to humanity in a perfect environment in Eden, as individuals, and through government. Each concludes with mankind turning to sin, and the just judgment of a consequence-based relationship with God. Yet the Father’s great faithfulness and love continued to woo people back to Him.*

1. How many illustrations of all-in allegiance demonstrated by obedience can you note in chapter 22?
2. Why do you suppose Abraham was so positive in verse 5 when he told the servants, “*we will worship and then we will come back to you*”? (check out NT revelation in Hebrews 11:17-19).
3. What parallels do you see between Genesis 22:8-14 and God the Father when His Son was sacrificed on Calvary?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** *Isaac is the son of blessing. He tapped into what his father accomplished (opening Abraham’s wells rather than digging new ones), and even fell into the same sin as his father.*

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

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YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?

S-T-U-D-Y JACOB: Focus Passage: Genesis 32 Extended Reading: Genesis 25:19-50


Jacob's fallen nature stands front and center (how would you like to be named "Deceiver," the meaning of Jacob?) The self-absorbed rascal connived from birth (grabbing his older brother's heel) until the end when he refused to send Benjamin to save his sons. Jacob took advantage of his brother Esau's vulnerable state to rob him of his birthright. Jacob and his mom deceived his blind father into blessing him. When Jacob ran away to his uncle Laban, he tricked Laban into giving him a large part of his own flocks, again running away at night (although catch the humor in Uncle Laban matching him as a conniver!) When Jacob returned home, he tried to buy Esau's good will.

Yet God continued in His covenant faithful to Abraham, swore it again to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob (Ps 105:8-11). God's great faithfulness brings all His promises to pass. Jacob's first recorded encounter with God occurred in a dream at Bethel, although Jacob forgot God's promise of His "with you" presence. Later God gave Jacob a dream about Laban's flocks, told him to return home, and wrestled with him face-to-face at the brook Jabbok, Jacob's crowning event. The defining event of Jacob's life occurred at the brook Jabbok, as he was returning to his brother Esau, whose birthright he stole. Jacob's kneejerk reaction was still to manipulate and scheme, although now he shot up a quick "foxhole" prayer in the midst of manipulation out of fear (9-12). God answered Jacob's first recorded prayer. What great faithfulness towards this child who struggled so very much to trust God! God wrestled with Jacob face-to-face, and changed his name from "Deceiver" to "Israel," meaning Prince. At a ripe old age shortly before his death, Jacob blessed his children. Later Jews invoked the phrase "*the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*" From Deceiver to Prince!

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *Isaac had two sons. The one, Jacob, schemed from the beginning, grabbing his older twin brother's heel.*

1. Chapter 32:1-21 begins with the schemer, Jacob, returning to his brother, Esau, who he robbed of his inheritance. How did Jacob attempt to manipulate the circumstances, with a "foxhole" prayer shot up in the middle (32:9-12)?
2. How did God meet Jacob's "foxhole" prayer in 32:21-31?
3. What is the significance of Jacob's name change in 32:29?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** *The BIG-STORY shifts from Jacob to his favorite son, Joseph. Jacob's favoritism caused a family rift, like with his dad, Isaac. His brothers sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. God was "with him," and he rose to 2nd in command in Egypt, saving his family from a severe famine, and providing the incubator to become a nation.*

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

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S-T-U-D-Y MOSES: Focus Passage: Exodus 33**Extended: Ex 1-20+32-34; Num. 10:11-33; Deut. 32-34**

A courageous mother and sister, Jochebed and Miriam, saved Moses from the sentence of death as a baby. Moses means “*one who draws out,*” since he was drawn out of the water and would later draw his people out of Egypt to freedom. Moses was raised in the household of the Pharaoh’s daughter with the highest education and training of the most powerful and advanced nation of the day. At forty (Acts 7:23), Moses took his people’s cares into his own hand, killed an Egyptian and fled to the desert for forty years. Like many of us, our passion for our destiny may be spot-on, even if our timing and manner are off.

The exodus from Egypt is truly a creation of a nation called to be distinctively God’s people. Relive the emotions of a mass of oppressed people with their doubts and complaints, with their hopes and desires. All ten plagues were direct attacks on various counterfeit gods of Egypt (12:12), revealing the one, true God as He set His people free with His own strong hand. After 430 years, they were free. However, like Adam before, the Israelites frequently chose comfort over obedience. Their disobedience caused them to wander in the desert for forty years. A distinctive element during their wandering years was the Lord’s “*with you*” presence in the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22).

The lessons here loom clear. Ten different times, God’s people whine and complain, not trusting their Lord. Again and again, the Lord patiently and faithfully teaches and reteaches His call to obedience. Psalm 106:15 is one illustration, and an important lesson for us. God’s people forgot what God had done for them. They put God to a test, asking for meat instead of God’s provision of manna. “*So God gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them.*” From Egypt to Sinai, Israel learns that they exist only because of the presence of the Lord, like in Moses’ crowning event in Exodus 33.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *As Jacob’s descendants multiplied and prospered in Egypt for 430 years, they presented a growing threat to Egypt. The Pharaoh tried to kill all the Jewish male-babies. God heard their groaning, sovereignly intervened by using Moses’ sister to save her baby brother Moses, the one who would deliver Israel through God’s strong hand.*

1. In 33:9-11, what do you see in the Lord’s relationship with Moses that you long for?
2. How important is God’s “*with you*” presence according to 33:14-15?
3. What excites your heart about who God is in 33:19-20 (and the fulfillment of this promise in 34:6-7)?

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

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YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?


S-T-U-D-Y **JOSHUA: Focus Passage: Joshua 23+24:15** **Extended Reading: Joshua 1-11+22-24 (or 1-6)**

God brought His people through the desert, providing for and protecting her. The twelve Biblical books from Joshua to Esther are history attentive to the conditions in which people encounter and experience God. Israel at its best participated in what happened around them because they believed that God was personally alive and active in the world. Joshua succeeded Moses as commander-in-chief of Israel, leading them across the Jordan into the Promised Land. These events in Joshua proved to **their** generation that they are also Yahweh's people. As the great King conquers with His people, they now have their **own** "Red Sea" experience. Conquering the Promised Land reminds us of our own conquests.

Chapters 1-12 recount three military campaigns spanning seven years, in which Joshua meets and defeats more than 30 enemy armies. The distinctive strategy the Lord gave Joshua to conquer Canaan with a twofold thrust is key. The stunning victory at Jericho shows the importance of following God's direction down to the minutest detail, even when it seems foolish. *Phase 1*, Joshua's first military thrust cut the enemy forces in half, "divide and conquer" to establish Israel back in the land that God gifted Abraham as his inheritance. In the *2nd phase*, God's people mopped up pockets of resistance. Each tribe subdued the smaller pockets of resistance in their areas in order to settle their families in safety. Brilliant, since each tribe had the greatest motivation to finish this last stage. The end of this book of war and peace found Israel finally settled in the land. Now Israel could fulfill their expansive calling as a nation (Gen. 12:1-6; Deut. 34:4). Although they did not drive out all the nations, others know Joshua best for conquering the Promised Land. However, I consider his crowing accomplishment the way he finished well, challenging his friends to full allegiance. "*As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord*" (24:15).

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

1. What key ideas do you see in Joshua's final words to leadership in 23?

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *Because of disobedience, the Lord would not allow Moses into the Promised Land. Before he died, he passed leadership onto Joshua. Joshua was one of the spies who trusted God to conquer, and was mentored directly by Moses. The Lord came to Joshua and told him that His "with you" presence would never leave or forsake him. Then He pointed Joshua to his true source of strength in Joshua 1:8.*

2. What characteristics of the Lord does Joshua hone that my help leaders?
3. How can you incorporate Joshua 24:15 into your personal life?

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

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YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?

S-T-U-D-Y **SAMUEL: Focus Passage: 1 Samuel 3** **Extended Reading: 1 Samuel 1-19+25:1**


1 Samuel picks up God's **BIG-STORY** from the close of the book of Judges. God advances His plans. He unfolds his covenant. Although the characters are fascinating, we must acknowledge the Lord as the star of this epic drama. God unwaveringly advances His plan, using imperfect people to do it. God called the final judge, Samuel, to restore Israel both spiritually and politically. Samuel, the prophet and king-maker, anointed the first two kings, the first one reluctantly. Israel's request for a visible king like the nations sinfully rejected the one, true King (8:7; 12:17). This theological emphasis is the essential focus. God acceded to their request, yet never abdicated His sovereignty. Each king was to represent God's sovereignty. Saul proved he could not even rule his own heart, quickly shifting to disobedience. Because Saul lacked a heart for God, God rejected him, sending Samuel to anoint young David to replace Saul as king. This drove David to flee into the wilderness to escape death from the jealous king.

The story of Samuel as an obedient child in chapter 3 is not an incidental story. The crowning event of Samuel's life occurred at the beginning as a child when he first came to know the Lord. A word from the Lord was rare in those days. Yet the Lord continued to reveal Himself to Samuel through His word so none of Samuel's words fell to the ground (3:19-21). Samuel's desperation for God and quick obedience roused God's people to break out of their complacency. This desperation to hear and obey the Lord springing from God's "with you" presence begins every move of God. Our ego-bound experience is too small to live in the largeness of the accompanying and commanding presence of such a God.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** After Joshua, the book of Judges describes seven 5-fold cycles of sin in which God's people repeatedly cycle into disobedience. Yet God faithfully rescued when they called on Him. They didn't yield their lives to God, and "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:5). Scattered in these times are great men and women of faith, like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Deborah and Ruth.

1. How would you characterize the spiritual culture Samuel was born into (3:1)?
2. Eli taught Samuel his first lessons on responding to how God communicates with His people. What can you glean from 3:9-10 about Samuel's response?
3. How do you think the Lord's "with Samuel" presence affected the summary of God's ministry through him in 3:19-21?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** The death of Saul in the last chapter of 1 Samuel paves the way to David taking his place as king.

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

- For what are you most grateful or thankful *today* or this week?
- Read the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses per person.
- Debrief insights & responses from S-T-U-D-Y for the passage above.
- PRAY & MINISTER to each other, emphasizing truth from this passage.

STUDY

"For Ezra had set his heart to **study** the law of the Lord, and to **practice** it, and to **teach** His statutes and ordinances in Isreal" (Ezra 7:10, NASB).

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SUMMARY: What's the "big-picture" idea? Trace the flow.

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THE Verse: What is my key verse?

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UPLIFTS: What leaps out like a neon (touching mind and/or affections)?
How does this passage help you appreciate God more?

D

DIFFICULTIES: What puzzles me from this passage ("*Deut. 29:29 Bucket*")?

Y


YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?

S-T-U-D-Y DAVID: Focus Passage: 2 Samuel 11 **Extended: 1 Sam. 16-31+2 Sam. to 1 Kings 2:11**


The promise of the covenant God confirmed with David is much larger than Israel's ability to keep her end of the deal. It's a forever throne that only God can establish. The Davidic covenant is "*Messianic*," that is, it will find its ultimate fulfillment, not in any earthly king, but rather in Jesus Christ, the King of all kings. The Lord is the star of this story! He is the one enthroned in the heavens with the earth as his footstool. If a king did not represent God, he was removed (Saul, 1 Samuel 15:26-31) or disciplined by the Lord (David, 2 Samuel 12:9-12). The Lord is sovereign overall and is working out his plans in this world. This simple theological point is the only reason Israel experienced any success. Note the consistent interweaving of God's initiative in David's life.

David is the "*man after God's heart*" because he was so aware of God's presence. Read the entire David-story and note all the times he "*inquired of the Lord*" with a ready "*Yes, Sir!*" as soon as he knew God's heart. The inspired account of David's faithfulness and the blessing of God grinds to a screeching halt in chapter 11. At a time when David should have been on the field of battle, he finds himself instead on the roof of the palace. This telling event in David's life began with a casual glance. A lustful thought. An inquiry. Escalation to action. Cover-up. The king of Israel set in motion a chain of events that culminated in adultery and murder. Because of God's covenant faithfulness, David remains a "*man after God's own heart*" as he repented and recommitted full allegiance to God's will (see chapter 12). Still, David's sinful acts created devastating aftershocks of turmoil and trouble for years within David's family in the form of murder, incest, treachery, and open revolt.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *David, the king-elect in 1 Samuel becomes the king-enthroned in 2 Samuel, first over Judah and then over all Israel. Notice how David conducts his campaign to reunite all of Israel with patience and without animosity, trusting God's timing. David represents God's heart, the "man after God's heart."*

1. What should have occupied David's attention at this time (11:1)?
2. How can you describe the escalation of David's sin?
3. Why is the last sentence in chapter 11 so crucial?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** *David's choices sowed destruction. Solomon (Bathsheba's son) began well. His passion for God cooled as pagan wives turned his heart away. Solomon died as a spiritually divided man, leaving behind a divided nation with growing indifference.*

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

- For what are you most grateful or thankful *today* or this week?
- Read the passage out loud in a circle, a few verses per person.
- Debrief insights & responses from S-T-U-D-Y for the passage above.
- PRAY & MINISTER to each other, emphasizing truth from this passage.

STUDY

"For Ezra had set his heart to **study** the law of the Lord, and to **practice** it, and to **teach** His statutes and ordinances in Isreal" (Ezra 7:10, NASB).

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YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?

S-T-U-D-Y ELIJAH: Focus Passage: 1 Kings 19 Extended Reading: 1 Kings and 2 Kings


Israel's request to Samuel for a visible king like the nations sinfully rejected their current great King, the one, true King (8:7; 12:17). Israel had nothing to show for it except captivity as the just judgment for disobedience and idolatry. *The Message Bible* intro to 1-2 Kings continues: "Even the bright spots—David and Hezekiah and Josiah—were not very bright. Human beings, no matter how well intentioned or gifted, don't seem to be able y [on their own] to represent God's rule anywhere close to satisfactory. The Books...are a relentless exposition of failure—a relentless five-hundred-year documentation proving that the Hebrew demand of God to 'have a king' was about the worst thing they could have asked for." The **BIG-STORY** points to Jesus as the only answer! Yet in the midst of this incredible mess, God does not discard them. He remains faithful and committed that they would **obey** and **honor** Him, which is also their highest and best. God works out His purposes in the midst of confrontation and revelation, judgment and salvation. God's sovereignty is not this dead-weight, imposed dominance. He created image-bearers to partner with Him. He is after our hearts, so we yield with all-in allegiance so He can change us from the inside out.

God continued to faithfully woo His people back to His presence, often using prophets. The prophet, Elijah, burst on the scene in 1 Kings 17:1. He declared to wicked King Ahab that the Lord will shut the heavens from precipitation for a few years, until Elijah told him. God sends Elijah back to choose off the false prophets and bring rain again to demonstrate who the one, true God is. 1 Kings 18, the crowning event of Elijah's life, is one of the greatest recorded days of ministry ever. Yet at the end, Queen Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah and he turned tail, hiding in depression under a Juniper tree. To study Elijah's life further in addition to chapters 17-19, read 21:17-28 and 2 Kings chapters 1 and 2.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *Israel demanded from Samuel a king like the nations around them. After 500 years and forty kings, their "better" way was exposed as a total failure, like Eve and Adam's "better way" in Genesis 3. Yet God remained faithful to His covenant.*

1. Why do you think the angel of the Lord first dealt with Elijah's deep discouragement with physical refreshment (19:5-9)?
2. How did God respond to Elijah in the midst of his first pity-party (11-13)?
3. Why did God call Elijah to service after his second pity-party (15-18)?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** *At the end of the reign of Kings, the 10 northern tribes are scattered and Judah goes into captivity for seventy years (see Daniel 9:2 and Jeremiah 25:11-12).*

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

- For what are you most grateful or thankful *today* or this week?
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YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?


S-T-U-D-YDANIEL: Focus Passage: Daniel 1 Extended Reading: Daniel 1-6 + 9-10

God used nations as His instrument to deport Judah to Babylon as a consequence of their disobedience. Although Israel was unfaithful, God remained faithful to His covenant promises. He sent Judah into captivity for seventy years for their earned consequences (Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25:11-12). The book of Daniel presents a majestic sweep of prophetic history, a glimmer of hope in the midst of captivity. Daniels' dreams and interpretations of other's dreams convinced Jew and Gentile alike that wisdom and power belong to the Lord alone. God is sovereign, in control, not only of the past, but also the present and future as well. The crowning event of Daniel's life jumps out in chapter one. Daniel is one of the few individuals in the OT about whom nothing negative is ever written. What was the key to his life? King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon first instructed the head of his palace staff to find the best of the best from the Israelite captives and indoctrinate them in the Babylonian language and customs, including the lore of magic and fortunetelling. Daniel and his three friends were chosen and excelled, in God's way, because the Lord was with them. His spiritual integrity released insight to tactfully propose a creative alternative for a difficult situation. These heart-attitudes characterized his long life and those he influenced (see the responses of Daniel's three friends, 3:16-18). As you read, note Daniel's view of God and his all-in allegiance to Him. According to best estimates, Daniel was 76 years old in chapter 4, 86 in chapter 5, and an energetic 93 years old in chapter 6. Three different world-rulers felt the hand of God in their lives because God was with Daniel. His faith shines brightly through every God-assignment.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE: *The King of all kings handed the nation of Judah over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as the just consequence for five hundred years of disobedience. Daniel and his three friends came as captives from Judah to Babylon.***

1. What could Daniel not accept about his present culture? Why? And how did Daniel tactfully propose a creative alternative (1:6-14)?
2. Why do you think they passed the 10 day test so well (1:15)?
3. In addition, how did God set them up for success (1:17+20)?

 **CONTEXT AFTER: *When Daniel realized from his study of Scripture that Jeremiah predicted a seventy year captivity, and that time was drawing near, he turned to the Lord God to plead in prayer ((9:9:1f). Later Daniel mourned and fasted for 21 days (10:1-3) until the answer came. From the first day Daniel prayed, God's answer was on its way. It was delayed because of heavenly warfare (10:12-14). God partners with our faithfulness to fulfill what He has already determined!***

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

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S-T-U-D-Y NEHEMIAH: Focus Passage: Nehemiah 2 Extended Reading: Nehemiah 1-13


Israel had been scattered, discipline for their disobedience. The few remaining Jews in the land had been marginalized by society, pummeled and living on little. God raised up and sent two men with visionary leadership, Ezra and Nehemiah. God has designed us for a satisfying, coherent, integrated life with meaning and purpose. Many today divide their lives into the spiritual and the secular, to our great hurt. Work, by its very nature, is holy for God's people. Ezra was a Biblical scholar and teacher. He restored the temple worship and led the people into an obedient listening to Scripture. By contrast, Nehemiah worked in government in the employ of a foreign king. He returned to Jerusalem as a building contractor called on to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra and Nehemiah's lives converged as contemporaries who worked side by side, one with God's Word and the other with stones and mortar and Scripture. *"The stories of these two men are interwoven in a seamless fabric of vocational holiness. Neither job was more or less important or holy than the other"* (intro to Nehemiah in *The Message*).

Nehemiah's crowning event was chapter two, which reveals the essentials of prayer and trust and planning already solidly laid at the core of his life. The book of Nehemiah is a superb book on leadership/influence since his task demanded inspired and forthright leadership. Nehemiah and the workers were under constant challenge and threat, at times by hostile assault. Yet Nehemiah never diverted from God's call. Despite stiff opposition, Nehemiah and his band of workers completed the massive job in only 52 days. Nehemiah's all-in allegiance to the Lord extended beyond physical reconstruction to reforming its citizens.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

 **CONTEXT BEFORE:** *Ezra returned to a battered people in the land, holding on by a thread. Ezra encouraged the people of God, rebuilt the temple, and put God's word back at the center (Ezra 7:10). However, the temple was vulnerable, surrounded by crumbled walls that could not protect. God raised up a cupbearer to the heathen king for the task of rebuilding the city walls so God's people could return.*

1. How can fear and faith be mixed together in our lives (2:2-3)?
2. What can you learn for your life from how Nehemiah prayed to the God of heaven and answered the king in verse 4?
3. On What did Nehemiah base his confidence (2:8+12+18+20)?

 **CONTEXT AFTER:** *After the last prophet, silence reigned for 400 years...until Jesus burst onto the scene as a baby in the manger. Jesus fulfilled 100's of OT prophecies in His First Coming, and will fulfill the rest in His Second Coming in power and glory.*

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

- For what are you most grateful or thankful *today* or this week?
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God Revealed in OT & NT Is One!

*“It seems like two God’s, the **OT** God of wrath and the **NT** God of love.”*

I have heard this numerous times from younger Christians still learning to understand the Trinity, even though only one, true God exists. He is unchanging, the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). And certainly the OT gives us challenges as it often seems to violate our 21st century sensibilities.

Let’s begin, though, with God, not our own views. Since God is Creator and created moral law, He is the one and only One who ultimately determines what is just. God has an eternal perspective that sees the end of small beginnings. He has no moral obligation to share every detail with us, nor could He because of our limitations as created persons. Yes, some OT passages give us trouble through our personal lens of justice, like forbidding intermarriage, destroying Sodom and Gomorra, or His command to annihilate the demon worshipping Canaanite peoples to protect the hearts of His children from turning to idolatry.

Justice and love complete each other. Without justice and judgment when love is violated, evil would conquer love. Only God can both love and judge simultaneously in a way that is both just and righteous. The Israelites sing praise to God’s love and justice, two necessary aspects of His character (Ps 101:1).

Another important lens through which to understand the OT is as God the good Father raising His beloved child, that is, His people. In childhood, we get to know important qualities of our parents. A good father lovingly and consistently follows through on the consequences of disobedience to train His child (Hebrews 12:5-11) and also to protect his child from dangerous outside influences.

God is no petty tyrant or unfeeling judge. God is the Creator of the world who establishes all moral standards. He is the wisest Father who unfailingly knows what is best. He always has the highest and best for His children in His heart, even when we rebel because we are blinded to His goodness. Any good father would respond like this, if he accurately evaluated and was able to respond. God can! Here are a few brief ideas of how to read some of the difficult OT passages.

1. *If Towards His People:* God disciplines His children in order to raise them up to reach for their full destiny (Hebrews 12:4-13). Out of love, good parents say “no” to a young child who throws a fit if he/she can’t go to an X-rated movie. We protect from idols while training over time to more discernment.
2. *If Towards the Rebellious World:* God protects His vulnerable children from what would ultimately turn the heart of His precious ones to destructive choices. When God sent the Israelites into the land He had given them, He commanded the Israelites to wipe out the people. The Canaanite religion was so vile that it would have destroyed their spiritual life (Ps 105:34-39). Read Judges and note the results of Israel not fully driving out these people.
3. *If Towards the Fallen World:* Not only does God protect His children, He also protects the world from what could destroy it. The worldwide flood in Genesis 6-8 was a purging of spiritual rebellion. During the Middle Ages, some of the worst plagues ravished Europe, until they realized they must respond radically to destroy it, burning everything touched by the plague. The plague could not be seen, but lurked to attack unsuspecting people.

Our Father dealt very concretely with Israel since young children think less abstractly. He also accommodated His language to what they could grasp since they were a people of their time. Some of the words do sound harsh to our ears. God is always after hearts, though, not only behavior, training up His children until Jesus came (Galatians 3:23-24 NASB). Our Father yearns for our hearts to incline toward Him “so that it might go well with them” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Don't miss this!

The Father always loves us, even in sin, which is why His justice demands our return to God through the only way He established, blood-sacrifice. The cross is the sweet spot where God's justice and His love kiss. Without justice and just condemnation, love is eventually undermined. And Jesus gives us a glimpse into **why** people struggle with any of God's ways. This timeless truth was just as true in the NT as it is today. *"If the world hates you, keep in mind [that] they do not know the one who sent me"* (Jesus in John 15:18-24). Those who come against God's actions through the lens of their own personal standards for fairness and morality are actually fighting **against** what is right. God sets the standards for right; not mere men. The ultimate question is: *"Who is final authority in this situation, a created human or God Almighty?"*

MY NOTES ABOUT GOD'S CHARACTER:

For the TEACHER: Teaching for LifeChange in Interactive Groups

As teachers our three, primary goals are: (1) to equip and release life-related Bible learning in others (2) to develop a “soil” in community conducive to flourishing spiritual growth, and (3) to multiply teachers (2 Tim. 2:2). Three broad, basic styles cover the gamut of teaching (with many variations). All three are appropriate so select the one that best aligns with our end-game. If our goal is to maximize LifeChange in community and multiply leaders, then I believe the group needs to be encouraged to shift to more active preparation and participation (the 3rd option).

1. *Directive* – preaching or podcasts are popular examples. I have learned much from these.
2. *Discussion* – the teacher brings the passage or topic, and a series of questions to draw out.
3. *“Discovery by doing”* – This is how I describe interactive, response-based learning. Each prepares before group and puts truth into practice, & teachers still teach with short bursts.

What’s my aim as I encourage “discovery by doing,” where learners best take ownership?

1. *For the Group*: To provide an easy-to-practice way for all to study Scripture on their own as lifelong *life*-learners, from Jr. High to adult learners. Propel learning out of the group into our real-life experience, accelerating learning as we connect truth with daily life.
2. *For the Group*: To shift responses over time to become more active learners, increasing each member’s preparation beforehand and participation in the group. Knowledge put into practice fuels Spirit-generated experience that transforms us from the inside out.
3. *For the Group*: To shift believers over time from a focus on “*I need my needs met*” (consumerism) and “*I come when it feels right*” (convenience) to “*I come to serve others.*” This shift from Jesus’ 1st tier of training (“*Come & See*”) to His 2nd tier (“*Come & Follow Me*”) releases more rapid, sustainable growth as it develops a “soil” conducive to healthy growth that is both *relational, biblical* and *intentional* (1 Thes. 1:6-7).
4. *For the Teacher*: Select the learning approach best suited for the group. **If** the group comes unprepared, default to *discussion* by utilizing the three questions provided. Then patiently nudge them to pre-prepare to maximize their growth. **If** the group is just beginning to study, for now just use the “*sprint*” with the “*learning by doing*” style. Add the additional reading noted in the chart at the end to stretch them and accelerate growth.
5. *For the Teacher*: To provide a fruitful, easy to use way of teaching. Now leaders are freed from the weekly drive to prepare a lesson **for the group** so they can devote more time to **their** inner life. “*Study for yourself and teach for others.*” Study as deeply as you wish, but only bring what is helpful to release active learning in the group. In time, this style will mean **less** prep time for the teacher and **more** impact for the group. *Win/Win.*
6. *For the Teacher*: This reproducible model naturally provides opportunities to multiply more leaders through on-the-job-training. Model what you want to reproduce.
7. *For the Teacher*: These “*sprints*” also model a flexible strategy to disciple anyone at any level in any culture...one chapter of Scripture **plus** an outside reading to help take off our old lens and change how we think. “*Sprints*” sow this strategy with its initial paragraph. I have written booklets to parallel each of the eight “*sprints*” (chart at end).

Healthy spiritual learning is not primarily knowledge-based, but putting into action what we are learning so we see Reality more fully and accurately. This learning style (“*discovery by doing*”) “*flips*” traditional learning, using the learning tool, *S-T-U-D-Y*. Instead of knowledge-based learning, “*flip*” learning to **doing**-based learning as each pre-prepares. Come alongside so each member might:

1. hear God during the week through His Word (“**S-T-U-D**” in *S-T-U-D-Y*),
2. respond to God (by doing “**Y**” in *S-T-U-D-Y*: “*Your Response*”). When a group is new, I let them know we will begin next week with their “**Y.**”
3. debrief together as we reflect on what we **learned** from what we **did**.



First think “layer learning,” building an accessible foundation for lifelong *life*-learning. Then build upon it. How do we do this practically with the 5-week “*sprints?*” What are the “nuts & bolts”? When I teach, I think through the dual lens of “*S-T-U-D-Y*” & “*Debrief.*”

First, assign the passage at the end of the **prior** week so each group member may read the passage and work through *S-T-U-D-Y* with the passage during the week (top line in diagram). The short summary, the questions and the quotes are all designed to help dig a bit deeper into the text during the week. Each member determines for themselves how much time and effort they invest in this season in their lives. When we gather, first take a brief time for relational connecting. Brief only because this style of learning naturally provides crucial relational connections around Scripture. *Koinonia* in community is a key ingredient for learning.

Second, each week I go through the same four points under “*Debrief*” at the bottom of the page. Teaching is initially “*drawing out*” what God has placed in others, then “*putting in*” if key concepts are not yet formed. Learning theory has discovered, and observation has confirmed, that our learning accelerates as we verbalize what God has done in us. This is the aim of *Debrief* at the bottom of the page. Then, only as necessary, I also “*put in*” any essential they may be missing with a short “*burst*” of teaching. Using the same format each week also provides a reproducible model to equip and release others to lead (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Our level of buy-in or ownership is a large factor in our spiritual health. Participation increases buy-in (“*Weigh-in leads to buy-in*”). So over time, I want to shift the group from *less* pre-preparation during the week to *more* prep, and from *less* interaction during the group time to *more*. This process can be a fun, relational and highly active, easily reproducible learning experience within a group setting without requiring professionally trained teachers.

We do these four bullet points under “*Debrief*” every week to model a consistent pattern for dynamic growth and easier reproduction of teachers (in the *S-T-U-D-Y/Debrief* rhythm).

1. Sow gratefulness to dispel the “grumpies” and attune our heart with the Lord.
2. Read the assigned chapter around the circle out loud (1 Timothy 4:13). If a new person comes, first give them *S-T-U-D-Y*, encouraging them to write down any thoughts as we read around. Let each know they are free to say “*pass*” at any time. This makes an easy entry for new people to enter the dialog, or for those who have not prepared.
3. Participate together in the give-&-take of community learning using *S-T-U-D-Y*. Encourage voluntary sharing of what impacted each participant, with no pressure... and some may come unprepared. Emphasize the “*Your Response*” since LifeChange accelerates as we put knowledge into practice in our everyday life. If the group is new, I normally give a heads-up the week before that we will **begin** with the “*Y*” next week.
4. Pray and minister to one another as the Spirit leads, all for LifeChange over time.

Once this style of teaching/learning roots itself deeply in a group, the teacher’s preparation takes *less* time and brings about *more* LifeChange, although it’s fine to study more deeply for yourself. As a teacher, you are still part of the group so share insights, but do it in short “*bursts*” of thought. I usually wait for others to share first. I have noticed that if I begin by sharing my insight, this may shut down others. Aim to release in each one a thirst and joy for lifelong *life*-learning in God’s Word. I believe this “*discovery by doing*” style in the 21st century resembles what Jesus did when He sent His disciples out on short term missions, then gathered them back to “*debrief*” what they experienced (Luke 10:17-24). All the world then became Jesus’ classroom.

A Healthy Discipline: Foundation of Word & Spirit Philippians

S-T-U-D-Y PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30 personally this week.
 Philippians is an eloquent witness to the presence of Christ lifting the person weighed down with sorrow; cause us to embrace gratitude and embrace gladness resting in Christ. The Spirit of God cannot stop us to partner with us in every aspect of our lives. The Spirit can fill light on Scripture, unveiling truth, making our heart to God and showing us what's true about God and us. As we keep in step with God's Spirit to advance the Kingdom, the Holy Spirit will work growth into our lives!

Yes, the Good News calls us to a difficult tension with the society in which we live. Jesus said in this way: "We are here in the world, yet not of it" (John 17:14-18). Jesus calls us to cultural participation, yet from a significantly different value system. Don't isolate from society nor revolt against society with force. Instead, Jesus calls us to a quiet revolution where we influence the world as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). Both salt and light must be in close contact to be effective, yet never lose their distinctiveness. Salt in a shaker and light under a cover are ineffective, so are salt that has lost its substance and a dim light. In Philippians 1:11-30, Paul calls us to such a life of good works in the world.

QUESTIONS and QUOTES for personal reflection.

1. From 1:12 on, Paul evokes from an introduction to the theme, "advancing the Gospel" (1:12). In 1:12, why do you think Paul could say being thrown into prison actually advanced the Gospel?
2. What could our lives look like if Philippians 1:21 was correct?

69. "One of your greatest hindrances... is the common habit of dividing our lives into two areas—the sacred and the secular. [We] inhabit at once two worlds—the spiritual and the natural... [Believe this area of] ability to be wholly unnecessary... The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our perfect example, and He knew no divided life!" (J.N. Taylor, "The Pursuit of God")

3. In 1:27, how does Paul describe the everyday expression of the life "as one who lives in the world, yet not of it"?

68. "[I]t may be difficult for the average Christian to get hold of the idea that his daily life can be performed as acts of worship acceptable to God by Jesus Christ... Let us practice the fine art of making every word a prayerful meditation. Let us believe that God is in all our whole deeds and learn to find Him there!" (J.N. Taylor, "The Pursuit of God")

DEBRIEF together in group next week.

3. For other members cause for this week's life & word material!

STUDY

"For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Isreal" (Ezra 7:10, NASB).

Date: / / Book & Chapter/Passage:

S

SUMMARY: What's the "big-picture" idea? Trace the flow.

T

THE Verse: What is my key verse?

U

UPLIFTS: What leaps out like a neon (touching mind and/or affections)?
How does this passage help you appreciate God more?

D

DIFFICULTIES: What puzzles me from this passage ("*Deut. 29:29 Bucket*")?

Y

YOUR Response: What have I done about what God is saying to me?

Dedication:

My heartfelt thanks goes out to those over the years who have been God’s instruments in my spiritual growth. They have grown alongside me in community-learning groups that are intent on multiplying disciples, that is, learners and followers of Jesus. Thanks for your love, honest transparency and willingness to let me use you as human guinea pigs in experimenting over the years to multiply disciples in a “*whole-person*” approach that respects both individual responsibility and community mutuality. I have a passion to help lay a healthy foundation in the lives of God’s people and to release the sleeping giant within. This is why I have written a series of eight initial 5-week “sprints” on these essentials (in addition to other “*sprints*” to learn like this over a lifetime). I also appreciate the input from my “passive-mentors,” those whose books I have read and experienced LifeChange through them. Passive mentors, I’m sure you will find language from your writings that have seeped into my own style, evidence of Luke 6:40 at work. I give credit where I know it’s yours.

Special thanks to Pastor Jamie Gillentine for his vision to see how life-impacting these “*sprints*” could be and also for his input to keep the format simple.

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Other Sprints also Available:

When this “*sprint*” is complete, feel free to go to my web site @ **JimFredericks.com** for other user-friendly “*sprints*” or other resources to grow as lifelong *life*-learners.

	Sprint	Title	Bible	Theme	Level II Engagement: Freder's Booklets***
Foundation for Discipleship	1st Sprint	A Healthy Disciple: Foundation of Word & Spirit	Philippians	Word & Spirit	Mining God's Word Times of Refreshing
	2nd Sprint	A New Lens on Self: Foundation of Identity in Christ	Ephesians 1-3	Our Identity in Christ	Created Community, Chpts 1-5
	3rd Sprint	God's Original Intent: Foundation of Living Like God	Genesis 1-15	Trinitarian Origens	Big God! Bold Design, Book 1 & 2 of the trilogy
	4th Sprint	Kingdom/Family Invitation: Foundation of the Good News of Jesus	Mark 1-16	Family/Kingdom of God	Big God! Bold Design, Book 1, Chapter 4
Values of Discipleship	5th Sprint	Multiply Disciples: Value of Disciples Making Disciples	1 Thessalonians	Disciplemaking	Cultivating Disciples
	6th Sprint	Life-on-Life Community: Value of Shared Life	Ephesians 4-6	<i>Koinonia</i> in Community	Created Community, Chpts 6-10 Big God! Bold Design, Book 2
	7th Sprint	Intimate Worship: Value of God's Presence & Prayer	Selected Psalms	Worship	Enjoying His Presence
	8th Sprint	Missional Compassion: Value of an Outwardly Focused Life	1 Peter	Mission in the World	Pursued by Community

*** See "Resource" tab on JimFredericks.com for free download to deepen each of these "*Sprints*."
My booklet, "*Foundation Stones*," offers a number of short blog-type articles on key building blocks.
"*Walking in Discipleship*" offers additional "*Sprints*" to deepen and broaden us on our journey.

