

***THE PLEASURE OF
MY FATHER'S FELLOWSHIP***

LEADER'S GUIDE

***CULTIVATING A RICH FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN THE BELIEVER
AND HIS HEAVENLY FATHER***

MARTIN PURYEAR

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THE PLEASURE OF MY FATHER'S FELLOWSHIP

SEMINAR FORMAT – ORIENTATION MEETING

Preparation

Review this lesson's assigned reading

Review the lesson plan

Gather your teaching materials / Bible

OPTIONAL: "Scheduling Form" (see below) (copy times the number of students)

Mechanics

Refreshments / Get Settled (5 minutes) ¹

Prayer ²

Go around the room and have each person introduce himself.

If a certain day and time have **not** been established by this group for their weekly meetings, hand out the "Scheduling Form." Have each one choose and prioritize **all** the days / times he can meet.

I will let you know (perhaps during this meeting or later by telephone) the regular day and time of our meetings.

Decide where to meet each week.

Make sure each one receives directions to the meeting place.

Next Meeting [day, date, time, and place]

Have someone read **Assignment # 2.** ³

Questions or Comments about Next Meeting's Assignment?

Warning

Now for a word of warning. You should be on the alert for spiritual warfare. To be involved in this type of study may draw from our spiritual enemies an increase in attack. We need to pray regularly for one another.

Comments or questions?

Close in Prayer

- thanking the Lord for the truth we just learned
- for motivation & power to apply what we just learned
- for protection from demonic attack

“Let’s remember to invest some time each day in fellowship with the Lord.”

“Let’s also remember to pray for and encourage one another.”

¹ Start on time, even if not everyone is here.

² Ask someone to pray for the Lord’s blessing upon this meeting.

³ Have someone read it from the “Schedule of Joyful Assignments.”

SCHEDULING THE DAY AND TIME OF OUR MEETINGS

Name & Preferred Means of Contact (text, email, telephone):

Our meetings will last **1 hour and 30 minutes**

We will meet each week at the following address:

FINDING A COMMON TIME TO MEET

1. Circle each day / time you are available to meet. ***Please try to circle as many as possible.***

Monday / morning	Monday / afternoon (not lunch)	Monday / night
Tuesday / morning	Tuesday / afternoon (not lunch)	Tuesday / night
Wednesday / morning	Wednesday / afternoon (not lunch)	Wednesday / night
Thursday / morning	Thursday / afternoon (not lunch)	Thursday / night
Friday / morning	Friday / afternoon (not lunch)	Friday / night
Saturday / morning	Saturday / afternoon (not lunch)	Saturday / night
Sunday / morning (before church)	Sunday / afternoon (not lunch)	Sunday / night

3. Now number the circled days / times in order of preference (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Once a mutually acceptable day and time surfaces, I will let you know when and where our meetings will be held.

THE PLEASURE OF MY FATHER'S FELLOWSHIP

SEMINAR FORMAT – INTERVIEW MEETINGS

Preparation

Review this lesson's assigned reading
Review the lesson plan
Gather your teaching materials / prayer slips / Bible

Before the Discussion (~ 15 minutes)

Refreshments / Get Settled (5 minutes)¹

During this time, ask _____ if I could interview him.

Interview / Ice-Breaker Question²

“During our first few meetings, we will be getting used to one another and the way we do things. So, I have included a few questions at the beginning of these meetings to help us all get to know each other. To start this meeting off, I would like to spend a little time interviewing _____.”

Class Business

Next Meeting [day, date, time, and place]

Next Meeting's Assignment³

Questions or Comments about Next Meeting's Assignment?

Prayer⁴

The Discussion (~ 70 minutes)

-
- ¹ Start on time, even if not everyone is here.
 - ² The interview portion is only for the first few meetings.
 - ³ Have someone read it from the “Schedule of Joyful Assignments.”
 - ⁴ Ask someone to pray for the Lord's blessing upon this meeting.

After the Discussion (~ 5 minutes)

Close in Prayer

- thanking the Lord for the truth we just learned
- for motivation & power to apply what we just learned
- for protection from demonic attack

“Let's remember to invest some time each day in fellowship with the Lord.”

“Let's also remember to pray for and encourage one another.”

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

_____, tell us a little about yourself.

1. Where are you from originally?
2. Tell us anything of special interest about your family background or upbringing.
3. Tell us anything you appreciate about your spouse or children.
4. Do you have any hobbies?
5. How long have you lived in this area?
6. What do you do for a living?
7. What do you hope to gain from this study?
8. (Ask an ice-breaker question here.)

ICE-BREAKER QUESTIONS

FUNNY / PLEASANT

- 1) If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you go?
- 2) If someone gave you \$1,000,000 tax-free, what would you do with the money?
- 3) If you could retire today, what would you do with your time?
- 4) Aside from becoming a Christian (and perhaps getting married), what is the best thing that has ever happened to you?
- 5) What is your favorite age and why?
- 6) Who was your favorite teacher in school and why?
- 7) What was your favorite subject in high school?
- 8) What is your all-time favorite restaurant in this area? What is one of your favorite meals there?
- 9) What was your favorite television show when you were growing up?
- 10) What is a movie that you really appreciate its message, or one that you just really enjoyed watching?
- 11) Who is your favorite actor or actress?
- 12) What is your favorite type of music?
- 13) Other than the Bible, what is your favorite book?
- 14) Who is your favorite author?
- 15) What is one of the funniest things that has ever happened to you?
- 16) What is one of the funniest dreams you have ever had?
- 17) If you could choose to be another nationality other than an American, which would you choose?
- 18) Other than an event recorded in the Bible, if you could go back in time to witness an historical event, what would it be?

- 19) When you first started driving, what kind of car did you have?
- 20) What is something funny about your husband / your wife / your sister / your brother that you think we should **all** know?
- 21) What is something you really appreciate about your husband / your wife / your sister / your brother?
- 22)
- 23)

SERIOUS

- 1) If you could say one thing to the Lord – or ask Him one thing – what would that be?
- 2) If you could have an audience with the president of the United States, what one thing would you tell or ask him?
- 3) If you knew the Lord was going to return one year from today, would you change anything about your daily activities, and if so, what would that be?
- 4) Other than Creation, if you could go back in time and witness an event recorded in the Old Testament, what would it be?
- 5) What do you like best about your church?
- 6) What is your favorite book of the Bible?
- 7) What is your favorite hymn, and what do you appreciate about it?
- 8) What type(s) of ministry do you most enjoy?
- 9) What is the most religious dream you have ever had?
- 10) Jesus renamed Simon, "Peter." What would Jesus rename you?
- 11)
- 12)
- 13)

THE PLEASURE OF MY FATHER'S FELLOWSHIP

SEMINAR FORMAT – TYPICAL MEETING

Preparation

Review this lesson's assigned reading
Review the lesson plan
Gather your teaching materials / prayer slips / Bible

Before the Discussion (~ 15 minutes)

Refreshments / Get Settled (5 minutes)¹

Class Business

Next Meeting [day, date, time, and place]

Next Meeting's Assignment²

Questions or Comments about Next Meeting's Assignment?

Prayer³

The Discussion (~ 70 minutes)

¹ Start on time, even if not everyone is here.

² Have someone read it from the "Schedule of Joyful Assignments."

³ Ask someone to pray for the Lord's blessing upon this meeting.

After the Discussion (~ 5 minutes)

Close in Prayer

- thanking the Lord for the truth we just learned
- for motivation & power to apply what we just learned
- for protection from demonic attack

“Let’s remember to invest some time each day in fellowship with the Lord.”

“Let’s also remember to pray for and encourage one another.”

THE PLEASURE OF MY FATHER'S FELLOWSHIP

SEMINAR FORMAT – GRADUATES

Preparation

Review the lesson plan
Gather your teaching materials / prayer slips / Bible

Before the Discussion (~ 15 minutes)

Refreshments / Get Settled (5 minutes) ¹

Class Business

Next Meeting [day, date, time, and place]

Next Week's Daily Readings

Questions or Comments about Our Next Meeting?

Prayer ²

The Discussion (~ 70 minutes)

¹ Start on time, even if not everyone is here.

² Ask someone to pray for the Lord's blessing upon this meeting.

After the Discussion (~ 5 minutes)

Close in Prayer

- thanking the Lord for the truths we just learned
- for motivation & power to apply what we just learned
- for protection from demonic attack

“Let's remember to invest some time each day in fellowship with the Lord.”

“Let's also remember to pray for and encourage one another.”

LESSON PLAN # 1**DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)****SCHEDULE OF JOYFUL ASSIGNMENTS
(pages 6-11) (10 minutes)**

Please turn to the "Schedule of Joyful Assignments," pages 6-11. This is a 13-week study and is divided into five parts:

- 1) During weeks 1 and 2 we will cover the "*Preliminaries*" of this course. We will become oriented to the importance of this subject and the habits we need to establish.
- 2) During weeks 3 and 4, we will learn how to slow down and think about what we are reading. That is, we will learn how to *contemplate* the Scriptures.
- 3) During weeks 5, 6, and 7, we will learn how to *pray* through the Scriptures. We will see the importance of discussing the Word of God with the Author Himself.
- 4) During weeks 8 and 9, we will learn how to *apply* the Scriptures to our lives.
- 5) Then, during the rest of our time together, weeks 10-13, we will "*Practice What We Have Learned.*" In the process we will see how our personal times of fellowship with the Lord can be used in a small group Bible study.

This schedule of assignments is designed to clearly communicate each week's readings. At the beginning of each meeting, I will ask one of you to read to the group the following week's assignment. This will orient us as to what we are to do for our next meeting.

[Call attention to Week 3 (page 6) / "Read 'Contemplating the Scriptures' **again.**"]

The Pleasure of My Father's Fellowship is a skill course. When learning a skill, repetition is important. At times I will have you read a few of the pages twice. There is a reason for this. After we discuss the material, reading it *again* will cause that material to "gel" in your thinking. So, please do not consider this busy work. It is an important part of the learning process.

? Do you have any comments or questions about our "Schedule of Joyful Assignments"?

FROM DISCIPLINE TO DELIGHT
(pages 12-13) (20 minutes)

[Have several read "From Discipline to Delight," pages **12-13**]

This is not meant to embarrass anyone. Just keep in mind that the purpose of this study is to enhance our relationship with the Lord.

? With one word or with a short phrase, how would you describe your time of fellowship with the Lord? What is it *typically* like? Would you call it "healthy and robust"? Is it "satisfying"? Would you say it is one of the "highlights of your day"? Or perhaps it seems more like an "obligation." It's "routine." It's "boring." You might even say it is "non-existent." Be honest.

[Pause for their answers.]

? I'm also interested in what you *do* during your time with the Lord. Do you spend one hour each day reading the Bible and one hour in prayer? Do you read a devotional book of some kind? Do you listen to Christian music? Do you pray on the way to work? Or perhaps you do not spend any time at all in fellowship with the Lord.

[Give each student time to answer.]

FOUNDATION AND FEATURES
(pages 14-16) (40 minutes)

What I would like to do now is make sure we all understand the *foundation* upon which this course is based. This is found at the top of page 14.

[Have someone read "Foundation," page **14**.]

? Would someone explain – in your own words – these two basic beliefs?

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

Listed on pages 14-16 are several features of this course.

[Have several read "Features," pages **14-16**]

“Comments, Questions, Clarifications?”

? I would like to ask the class if any one of these features captured your attention in some way ... something that stood out as being of special importance to you?

Turn to the bottom of page **16**. I would like to ask each of you to read your answer to the question, “What do you hope to gain from this study?”

[Have each student read his answer.]

Before we dismiss, does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 2

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

THOSE WHO STAND TO BENEFIT FROM YOUR TIME IN GOD'S WORD
(pages 17-18) (10 minutes)

Most surely, you want your own life to be changed by the time you spend with the Lord. But what about others? On pages 17-18 three groups of people were mentioned that also stand to benefit from *your* time in God's Word: your family, your church, and those who make up your world.

[Have several read "Those Who Stand to Benefit from *Your* Time in God's Word," pages **17-18**]

? When you were reading these pages, was there one group that made you say, "Yes, those are the ones I would really like to see impacted by my time in the Word and prayer"?

[As they answer this question, make sure they comment on *how* they want their lives to be impacted.]

Let us not miss the point: this is not an insignificant investment you are making. It is an investment in eternity itself.

A WORD (OR TWO) TO THE WISE
(pages 19-20) (10 minutes)

On pages 19-20 you read a section entitled "A Word (or Two) to the Wise."

[Have several read "A Word (or Two) to the Wise," pages **19-20**]

? Why is it important that you begin your time with the Lord in *prayer*? [The Spirit of God is the only One Who knows the thoughts of God (1st Corinthians 2:11-12). We are, therefore, dependent upon Him to properly understand God's Word. Each time we approach His Word, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to be our Teacher.]

- ? Why is it important that you draw near to your heavenly Father *each day*? Why so frequently? [We are going to be bombarded by this world's false philosophies every day. We, therefore, need to expose ourselves to God's Truth as much as possible to know how to respond to these lies.]

- ? Why is it important for you to establish a consistent *time and place* for Bible reading? [So that it does not get lost in the shuffle of the myriads of activities that crowd into our lives each day.]

The idea of this section is this: your time with the Lord needs to be **deliberate**.

FIRST THINGS FIRST
(pages 21-22) (25 minutes)

[Have two persons read "First Things First" and "A Group Study," pages **21-22**]

The questions that you were to answer on page 21 are designed to get these Bible study habits into your daily schedule and practice.

[Ask each student the following two questions:]

- ? _____, what is your intended schedule (*what time* will you begin and *where* will you be)?

- ? _____, do you foresee yourself having any problems maintaining this schedule?

[With each problem, turn the solution over to the group.]

CONTEMPLATING THE SCRIPTURES
(pages 23-25) (15 minutes)

Let's look now at pages 23-25, "Contemplating the Scriptures."

[Have several read "Contemplating the Scriptures," pages **23-25**]

Step One

- ? According to this schedule, what is the first step we should take before we begin that day's reading? [Begin each day of Bible reading with prayer.]

We have already mentioned why this is so important. We cannot accurately understand the Word of God unless the Spirit of God gives us that ability. It is also true that the power of God is needed for our lives to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Step Two

- ? According to this schedule, what is the second step we should take? [Read one (or more) chapters from the Bible.]

Step Three

- ? Having read one or more chapters, what question are you to ask yourself? (This is Step three.) ["What is the one Truth that stands out the most to me from this chapter(s)?"]

Step Four

With step four you are to *write out* your answer to this question.

- ? What reason was given for doing that? Why not just walk out the door and think about it? [(1) As soon as we walk out the door, we could easily be distracted from thinking about this truth. (2) Our thoughts are better articulated when we must put them into words. (3) Writing gives us time to absorb the thought. (4) You will also have a written record of your thoughts.]

Selecting a Gospel (5 minutes)

We will begin our study of the Scriptures by reading through one of the four Gospels. The Gospel we use will be selected by this small group. Please take a piece of paper, write the Gospel you prefer to read, and pass your votes to me. I can tell you in just a few minutes which one the majority prefers.

[Announce the result.]

We will, therefore, follow Appendix B, Schedule (A, B, C, **or** D), page (56, 57, 58, **or** 59).

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Before we dismiss, does anyone have any concluding comments or questions about this approach to having a daily time of fellowship with your heavenly Father?

LESSON PLAN # 3**DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)****APPENDIX A: THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF OUR READING SCHEDULES
(pages 54-55)****APPENDIX B: DAILY BIBLE READING SCHEDULES
(pages 56-59) (5 minutes)**

[Have several read "Appendix A: The Unique Features of Our Reading Schedules," pages 54-55]

I do not want to rush by these features without giving you an opportunity to comment on them.

? Do you have any thoughts or questions regarding any of these features?

There are many fine Bible reading programs available. For our purposes, we will be using the "Daily Bible Reading Schedule" on page ____ (56) (57) (58) (59), which means we will start with the Gospel of _____. Any one of these four schedules will expose us to the various kinds of literature found in God's Word:

- **narrative:** history from *The Gospels*
- **wisdom:** poetry from *The Psalms*
- **wisdom:** life's principles from *Proverbs*
- **legal:** a code of laws from *Exodus*
- **instructional (didactic):** doctrine and morality from *1st Thessalonians*
- **prophetic (apocalyptic):** prophecy from *The Revelation*

**REVIEW: CONTEMPLATING THE SCRIPTURES
(pages 23-25) (5 minutes)**

Last week we were introduced to an approach we will be using to help us meditate upon the Scriptures. And throughout last week, we applied this method to (Matthew **or** Mark

or Luke or John), chapters 1-5. Before we discuss our key thoughts, I would like for us to briefly review the process we used.

? _____, using your own words, would you review for the group the different steps we will use to help us meditate upon the Scriptures? (This can be found on pages 23-24.)

[Begin each day of Bible reading with prayer.

Read one chapter (or more) from the Bible.

As you read, ask yourself, "What is the one Truth that stands out the most to me from this chapter(s)?"

At the top of a new page, record this key thought in your journal.]

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts (55 minutes)

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that same passage. We have all read it; so, we should all be familiar with it.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

? Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 4

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

Evaluation (10 minutes)

You have now invested two weeks learning how to thoughtfully listen to your Father's counsel through a careful reading of His Word.

? What do you think so far about this approach? Do you have any comments, or questions, or problems?

[Turn each problem over to the group to solve.]

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts (55 minutes)

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that passage.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

? Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 5**DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)****PRAYING THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES
(pages 26-28) (15 minutes)**

Each day we have read one (or more) chapters from the Bible. We have asked ourselves the question, "What is the one truth that stands out the most to me from this chapter(s)?" And we have recorded our answer to that question in our journal.

Dear friends, the next step we take will be the most important thing we do all day.

[Have several read "Praying through the Scriptures," pages **26-28**]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

The most important thing we can do each day, after spending time in God's Word, is to discuss with our heavenly Father the counsel we just received from Him. But before we do, we need to prepare our hearts for this encounter with almighty God.

THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER: A REVERENT CONFIDENCE

- ? Why is it important to approach the throne of God with a reverent, respectful confidence? [Reverence and respect because *He is worthy* to be paid such homage. Confidence, because *He is worthy* to be believed.]

THE CONTENT OF PRAYER: THE WORD OF GOD

- ? Why should we use the Word of God to guide us as we pray? How does its content – its words – help us pray *with expectation*? [The better we know God's character and works, the better we know what He *is able* to do. The better we know God's promises and commands, the better we know what He *is willing* to do. These assurances of God, as revealed in His Word, strengthen our faith, causing us to pray with confidence.]

[Have someone read 1st John 5:14-15]

THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WHICH WE HAVE BEFORE HIM, THAT, IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US. AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US IN WHATEVER WE ASK, WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE REQUESTS WHICH WE HAVE ASKED FROM HIM. (1ST JOHN 5:14-15)

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts (50 minutes)

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that passage.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

- ? Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 6

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

**THE TURNING POINT
(pages 29-35) (70 minutes)**

Introduction

[Have someone read the first two paragraphs: page 29.]

**WHAT OBEDIENCE CAN NEVER ACCOMPLISH
(pages 29-34)**

First, the Problem (page 29)

[Have someone read this section: page 29.]

“Comments, Questions, Clarifications?”

? So, what is the problem we all have? [We have all broken the moral will of a holy God]

Notice that all *have* sinned (in the past) and we all *fall* short of God's glory (in the present).

**This Problem Could Not Be Worse Than It Is
(page 30)**

[Have someone read this section: page 30.]

“Comments, Questions, Clarifications?”

? So, why is our sinfulness such a serious problem? [It condemns us to eternal death]

[Summarize their answers.]

Our sins are capital crimes that call for capital punishment. Therefore, we are all on death row, awaiting God's execution of that sentence. To solve this problem, our sins must be washed away. We must become righteous in God's sight.

The way that is achieved is where the Christian faith separates itself from all other religions. That is because there *is* a righteousness God accepts; but there is also a righteousness He rejects.

First, let's discuss the righteousness He rejects.

**Why Man's Best Efforts Cannot Deliver Him from Eternal Death
(page 31)**

[Have 2 read this section: page **31**.]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

? What kind of righteousness does God reject? [the righteousness of *man*]

? Why does God reject the righteousness of man?

[First, the righteousness of sinful man is flawed / imperfect. God only accepts perfect righteousness.]

[Second, because sin has not been punished by death. God does not demand that we try harder to live better. He demands that we die for our sins. Moral crimes are capital crimes in the sight of a holy God; and capital crimes demand capital punishment.]

[Summarize their answers.]

**The Solution to Our Problem: the Perfect Righteousness of God
(page 32)**

[Have someone read this section: page **32**.]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

? What is the purpose of the Cross of Christ? [The Cross of Christ is God's Provision of death for our sins by a perfect Substitute]

[Summarize their answers.]

The payment for sins is death. There are two persons that can die for my sins: myself ... or Jesus Christ. But one of us must die. The justice of God demands it.

Furthermore, to be made right in God's sight requires righteousness.

[Have someone read Galatians 2:21.]

I DO NOT NULLIFY THE GRACE OF GOD, FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES THROUGH THE LAW, THEN CHRIST DIED NEEDLESSLY. (GALATIANS 2:21)

? What does this verse mean? [If I could be made right in God's sight by my own works of righteousness, then Jesus Christ died for nothing.]

[Summarize their answers.]

? What is the only righteousness God will accept? [His Own]

? How does one obtain God's righteousness? [through faith in Christ's Death on the Cross for our sins]

[Summarize their answers.]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

THE PRICELESS BENEFITS OF OBEDIENCE (pages 33-34)

The logical question then becomes, "If obedience does not save me or keep me saved, then why should I be concerned about obeying God?"

Obedience Produces an Increasing Capacity to Receive More Truth (page 33)

[Have someone read this section: page 33.]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

? What happens if the believer strives to apply God's Word to his life? [His capacity to understand and obey even more of God's Truth will increase. His life will become spiritually vibrant. His discernment will become more sensitive.]

? Why is that? Why would God give more understanding of His Word to someone who responds in faith and obedience to the Truth he knows? [The one who believes and obeys the revelation he is given shows that he can be trusted to

respond rightly to additional Truth. He proves himself to be a faithful steward of God's Truth.]

[Summarize their answers.]

Obedience Promotes the Wellbeing of Our Souls (pages 33-34)

[Have someone read this section: page 33.]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

Throughout our Christian lives, we will be tempted to disobey God's moral laws. (Most of these temptations will involve small matters). We will face many decisions that, if we choose to *obey* God, may result in some form of personal loss. Because we are aware of that, we will be tempted to compromise our convictions, beliefs formed by the teachings of Scripture.

So, the question we face is this: "What do I want most? God's pleasure or my pleasure? The eternal blessings of God or the temporal blessings of the world?" The time to make this decision is *before* we find ourselves in a situation that tempts us to forfeit our convictions.

? If there is anything in this life that would tempt you to compromise your convictions, what can you do right now to prevent that from happening?

Obedience Exalts the Glory of God's Name (page 34)

[Have someone read this section: page 34.]

? How does an obedient life glorify God? [It is a life that represents the character of God to the world.]

? What can we do to cultivate this God-centered perspective?

[Summarize their answers.]

Summary (page 34)

[Have someone read this section: page 34.]

IF THERE IS TIME

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

[First, ask for 2-3 volunteers; then randomly select 1-2 others to explain to the group their "key thought for the week." **Keep up with which ones I ask.**]

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that passage.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

- ? Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 7

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

THE TRAGIC DISASTER OF DISOBEDIENCE (page 35)

**A Diminishing Ability to Receive More Truth
(page 35)**

[Have several read this section, page 35.]

“Comments, Questions, Clarifications?”

- ? What happens if the believer knows God's Word but does not apply it to his life? [His capacity to understand the Scriptures will gradually diminish. His life will become spiritually indifferent. He will become weak in discernment.]

- ? Why is that? Why would God “deaden” one's ability to receive further insight if his practice has been to reject or ignore the Truth he has heard? [The one who responds with indifference or rebellion shows that he cannot be trusted with more of God's Light. He proves himself to be an unfaithful steward of God's Truth.]

[Summarize their answers.]

IF THERE IS TIME

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

[First, ask for 2-3 volunteers; then randomly select 1-2 others to explain to the group their "key thought for the week." **Keep up with which ones I ask.**]

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that passage.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

Conclusion

- ? Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 8

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

APPLYING THE SCRIPTURES
(pages 36-47)

Unexpected Temptations (pages 36-37)

[Have someone read from the title down to "Step One": page 36.]

STEP ONE

[Now have him read "Step One": pages 36-37.]

- ? What are we trying to accomplish with this step? [We are using God's Truth (His spiritual blessings) as a spiritual weapon (a spiritual sword) to fight temptation.]

STEP TWO

[Have someone read "Step Two": page 37.]

- ? Why is this step important? [We may have great zeal to say "No" to temptation; but we do not have the strength to do so. We need the power of almighty God to be victorious over sin.]

[Have someone read Matthew 26:41.]

KEEP WATCHING AND PRAYING THAT YOU MAY NOT ENTER INTO TEMPTATION; THE SPIRIT IS WILLING, BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK. (MATTHEW 26:41)

STEP THREE

[Have someone read "Step Three": page 37.]

- ? If you do not know what temptations you will face on any given day, how can these first two steps prepare you for this unknown? [These two steps, coupled with a growing knowledge of God's Word through daily Bible reading, will go far in preparing ourselves to respond to temptation with the composure of Christ.]

Expected Temptations (pages 37-39)

[Have someone read the first three paragraphs of this section: page **37**.]

STEP ONE (PRAYER FOR WISDOM)

[Now have him read "Step One": page **38**.]

Prayer plays an important role in our fellowship with the Lord.

- ? When we pray *before writing an application*, what are we praying for? [guidance / insights to know **how** to apply this truth to our lives.]

STEP TWO (STRATEGY)

a) It Should Be a Personal Commitment

[Have someone read "Step Two (a): It Should Be a Personal Commitment": page **38**.]

When we write our application, we have been advised to begin with the words "I will" rather than "A believer should."

- ? Why? ["I" personalizes the application. "Will" makes the application more of a commitment (to obey God in the power of God).]

b) It Should Be Specific

[Have someone read "Step Two (b): It Should Be Specific": page **38**.]

We have also been advised to make our application as specific as possible.

- ? Why? [Because you have already planned a specific course of action, you are more likely to obey the Lord when faced with the situation.]
- ? What guidelines were given to help us make our application as specific as possible? [Who, What, When, Where]

c) It Should Be Current

[Have someone read "Step Two (c): It Should Be Current": page **39**.]

Here, we are advised to write an application that addresses a situation we are facing right now (or one we are likely to face).

? Why is that? [We “feel” the need, even the urgency, to make this kind of commitment.]

STEP THREE
(PRAYER FOR POWER)

[Have someone read “Step Three”: page **39**.]

We believers have good intentions. But we are weak. Only God has the *power* to obey God.

SUMMARY

[Have someone read the “Summary,” page **39**.]

? Does anyone have any comments or questions about the process of writing an application?

EXAMPLES OF THE PROCESS

[Have someone read from “Examples of the Process” down to “Application” (bottom of page **40**).]

[Have someone read from “Application” (bottom of page **40**) to the end of this example (page **42**).]

“Comments, Questions, Clarifications?”

II. Your Situation

Let's consider a second example of this process of writing an application.

[Have someone read from “II. Your Situation” down to “Good Application (Specific)”: page **43**.]

[Have someone read from “Good Application (Specific)”: page **43**) down to the end of this example: page **44**.]

? Are you beginning to see how this is done?

III. Your Situation

Let's consider one more example of this process of writing an application.

[Have someone read from "III. Your Situation": page **45**, down to the end of this example: page **46**.]

"Comments, Questions, Clarifications?"

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

IV. Your Situation

[Have everyone turn to page **47**.]

Part of your assignment for next time will be to write an application based on a key thought from 1st John 5:14-15.

[Have someone read "Your Situation," "Passage," and "Key Thought."]

I know that this is a "made-up" situation for you. So, it's OK to "make up" the details of your application.

Next week I will ask each of you to read your "Who," "What," "When," and "Where" for the application you wrote. Then I will ask you to read the application statement you wrote based on these four "W's." After that, I will evaluate you.

You do not need to write any applications from this coming week's Bible readings. We should first learn *how* to do this before we add this step to our weekly readings.

IF THERE IS TIME

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

[First, ask for 2-3 volunteers; then randomly select 1-2 others to explain to the group their "key thought for the week." **Keep up with which ones I ask.**]

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that passage.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

CONCLUSION
(page 48)

[Have someone read "Conclusion": page 48.]

? Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 9**DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)****REVIEW: APPLYING THE SCRIPTURES (10 minutes)
(pages 36-47)**

As you read the Bible each day, you have been encouraged to journal your discoveries in the form of (what we are calling) "key thoughts."

After recording your key thought for the day, the Holy Spirit will often "prompt" you to respond to that truth in some way. So, last week we discussed how to turn this God-generated motivation into a deliberate course of action.

Step One: We said the first step is to pray. "Ask the Lord to show you how to apply this truth to your life."

Step Two: Then we learned how to develop a *specific* plan of obedience.

- We were to begin our plan with a personal commitment: "I will."
- Then, to make our commitment specific, we were to identify four "W's": Who, What, When, and Where.
- We were encouraged to apply this truth to a situation we were facing, or were likely to face, and not one that was theoretical.

Step Three: Finally, after writing out our application, we were encouraged to invest some time in prayer. "Father, please motivate and empower me to obey Your will."

This is how one prepares himself to obey God's Word.

**Application Assignment (45 minutes)
(page 47)**

For this meeting you were to have *written* an application for 1st John 5:14-15.

[Have someone read "Your Situation," "Passage," and "Key Thought," page 47.]

I would like to ask each of you to read your "Who," "What," "When" "Where" for the application you wrote. Then, please read the "I will" statement you wrote based on these four "W's."

After each of you finish, I will evaluate you.

[This evaluation may be challenging for you, the facilitator, since some of their applications may be quite general. You must tactfully "stretch" them to make their applications as specific and current as possible.]

- [Did his application begin with the words "I will"?)
- [Did he mention a specific who?]
- [Did he mention a specific what?]
- [Did he mention a specific when?]
- [Did he mention a specific where?]
- [Did his application sound current or likely to happen ... or did it sound too "whenever"?)

? Do you have any final comments or questions concerning the mechanics of writing an application?

IF THERE IS TIME

Discussion of Our Key Thoughts

Let's now discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

[First, ask for 2-3 volunteers; then randomly select 1-2 others to explain to the group their "key thought for the week." **Keep up with which ones I ask.**]

- 1) The first thing you should do is to read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- 2) Then read your key thought from that passage.
- 3) [To the group] After he presents his key thought, you will all have an opportunity to make your own comments about that passage.
- 4) I would encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by someone else that you would like to remember.

[Ask each person to report on his / her "key thought for the week."]

[Watch the clock! Pace the discussion according to the time you have.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

[Have someone read "Conclusion": page 48.]

LESSON PLAN # 10**DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)****Discussion over Our Devotions (65 minutes)**

We have now finished learning the principles we set out to learn for this course. From now on we – as a group – will be doing what we were formed to do. Our next four meetings will give us an idea as to what it is like to meet with a small group like this to discuss each other's key thoughts and applications as well as to pray for one another.

[Hand out prayer slips.]

[Assign prayer partners. Spouses may pray for one another. Otherwise, men pray for men and women pray for women.]

- 1) First, write down on your slip of paper your name and preferred means of contact (text, telephone number, or email address).
- 2) Next, write on this slip of paper the *application* of your "key thought for the week" that you plan to present to us later. You do not need to write down your key thought. [Give them time to do so.]
- 3) Now, let's go around the table to discuss our "key thoughts for the week."

[Before you begin, walk **each** person, step by step, through the following process. Have them become so familiar with these steps that each student could easily teach this method to others.]

- Read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.
- Now read your "one key thought for the week." But do **not** read your application just yet. I would like to give everyone an opportunity to make additional comments about this passage before you move into your application.
- *[To the group]* As always, I want to encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by others in the group that you would like to remember.

[Pause for discussion. Once the comments are over]:

- 4) Now tell us what your intended application is of that Truth.

[Have the **group** evaluate his application.]

- Did his application begin with the words “I will”?
- What was his “who”?
- What was his “what”?
- What was his “when”?
- What was his “where”?
- Did his application sound current or likely to happen ... or did it sound too “whenever”?

5) Now, pass your prayer slip to your prayer partner. This is the one who will be praying for you this week.

[Ask his prayer partner to lead the group in prayer for him right now.]

[Repeat the above steps (3) – (5) for each student. If time permits, you as the facilitator should also go through the process.]

APPENDIX E: THE LIABILITY OF BIBLE STUDY (10 minutes)
(page 65)

? Does anyone have any comments or questions about “Appendix E: The Liability of Bible Study”?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

I want to remind you to contact the person for whom you are praying sometime this week.

- Ask how his application is going.
- Ask how his times of fellowship with the Lord are going.
- Remind him that you are praying for him.

This contact is intended to be a time of both encouragement and accountability.

At the beginning of our meeting next week, I will ask if anyone would like to voluntarily describe how his application went this past week.

LESSON PLAN # 11

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

Last Week's Applications (10 minutes)

? Would anyone like to voluntarily tell us how your application went this past week?

- What happened?
- Were you successful?
- How was it a struggle?
- What would you have done differently?

[Their report on last week's application is highly important. Take extra time if needed.]

Discussion over Our Devotions (55 minutes)

[Hand out prayer slips.]

[Assign prayer partners. Spouses may pray for one another. Otherwise, men pray for men and women pray for women.]

- 1) First, write down on your slip of paper your name and preferred means of contact (text, telephone number, or email address).
- 2) Next, write on this slip of paper the *application* of your "key thought for the week" that you plan to present to us later. You do not need to write down your key thought. [Give them time to do so.]
- 3) Now, let's go around the table to discuss our "key thoughts for the week" from **Exodus 20-24**.

[Before you begin, walk **each** person, step by step, through the following process. Have them become so familiar with these steps that each student could easily teach this method to others.]

- Read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.

- Now read your “one key thought for the week.” But do **not** read your application just yet. I would like to give everyone an opportunity to make additional comments about this passage before you move into your application.
- [To the group] As always, I want to encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by others in the group that you would like to remember.

[Pause for discussion. Once the comments are over]:

4) Now tell us what your intended application is of that Truth.

[Have the **group** evaluate his application.]

- Did his application begin with the words “I will”?
- What was his “who”?
- What was his “what”?
- What was his “when”?
- What was his “where”?
- Did his application sound current or likely to happen ... or did it sound too “whenever”?

5) Now, pass your prayer slip to your prayer partner. This is the one who will be praying for you this week.

[Ask his prayer partner to lead the group in prayer for him right now.]

[Repeat the above steps (3) – (5) for each student. If time permits, you as the facilitator should also go through the process.]

APPENDIX F: THE ETERNAL INVESTMENT OF BIBLE STUDY (5 minutes)
(pages 66-68)

? Does anyone have any comments or questions about “Appendix F: The Eternal Investment of Bible Study”?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

I want to remind you to contact the person for whom you are praying sometime this week.

- Ask how his application is going.
- Ask how his times of fellowship with the Lord are going.
- Remind him that you are praying for him.

This contact is intended to be a time of both encouragement and accountability.

At the beginning of our meeting next week, I will ask if anyone would like to voluntarily describe how his application went this past week.

Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 12**DISCUSSION (75 MINUTES)****Last Week's Applications (10 minutes)**

? Would anyone like to voluntarily tell us how your application went this past week?

- What happened?
- Were you successful?
- How was it a struggle?
- What would you have done differently?

[Their report on last week's application is highly important. Take extra time if needed.]

Discussion over Our Devotions (55 minutes)

[Hand out prayer slips.]

[Assign prayer partners. Spouses may pray for one another. Otherwise, men pray for men and women pray for women.]

- 1) First, write down on your slip of paper your name and preferred means of contact (text, telephone number, or email address).
- 2) Next, write on this slip of paper the *application* of your "key thought for the week" that you plan to present to us later. You do not need to write down your key thought. [Give them time to do so.]
- 3) Now, let's go around the table to discuss our "key thoughts for the week" from **1st Thessalonians 1-5**.

[Before you begin, walk **each** person, step by step, through the following process. Have them become so familiar with these steps that each student could easily teach this method to others.]

- Read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.

- Now read your “one key thought for the week.” But do **not** read your application just yet. I would like to give everyone an opportunity to make additional comments about this passage before you move into your application.
- [To the group] As always, I want to encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by others in the group that you would like to remember.

[Pause for discussion. Once the comments are over]:

4) Now tell us what your intended application is of that Truth.

[Have the **group** evaluate his application.]

- Did his application begin with the words “I will”?
- What was his “who”?
- What was his “what”?
- What was his “when”?
- What was his “where”?
- Did his application sound current or likely to happen ... or did it sound too “whenever”?

5) Now, pass your prayer slip to your prayer partner. This is the one who will be praying for you this week.

[Ask his prayer partner to lead the group in prayer for him right now.]

[Repeat the above steps (3) – (5) for each student. If time permits, you as the facilitator should also go through the process.]

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER (5 minutes)
(pages 49-50)

The section entitled “Putting It All Together” on pages 49-50 was given to you as a summary of this method you have learned. It is a snapshot of the entire process.

[Have someone read "Putting It All Together," pages **49-50**.]

One last time, I would like to ask how this devotional study is going for you:

? What do you find helpful?

? What kind of problems are you having (if any)?

[With each problem, turn to the **group** for the solution.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

I want to remind you to contact the person for whom you are praying sometime this week.

- Ask how his application is going.
- Ask how his times of fellowship with the Lord are going.
- Remind him that you are praying for him.

This contact is intended to be a time of both encouragement and accountability.

At the beginning of our meeting next week, I will ask if anyone would like to voluntarily describe how his application went this past week.

Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

LESSON PLAN # 13

DISCUSSION (80 MINUTES)

Last Week's Applications (10 minutes)

? Would anyone like to voluntarily tell us how your application went this past week?

- What happened?
- Were you successful?
- How was it a struggle?
- What would you have done differently?

[Their report on last week's application is highly important. Take extra time if needed.]

Discussion over Our Devotions (60 minutes)

[Hand out prayer slips.]

[Assign prayer partners. Spouses may pray for one another. Otherwise, men pray for men and women pray for women.]

- 1) First, write down on your slip of paper your name and preferred means of contact (text, telephone number, or email address).
- 2) Next, write on this slip of paper the *application* of your "key thought for the week" that you plan to present to us later. You do not need to write down your key thought. [Give them time to do so.]
- 3) Now, let's go around the table to discuss our "key thoughts for the week" from **Revelation 1-5**.

[Before you begin, walk **each** person, step by step, through the following process. Have them become so familiar with these steps that each student could easily teach this method to others.]

- Read the verse or cluster of verses from which you will comment.

- Now read your “one key thought for the week.” But do **not** read your application just yet. I would like to give everyone an opportunity to make additional comments about this passage before you move into your application.
- [To the group] As always, I want to encourage you to write down any thoughts mentioned by others in the group that you would like to remember.

[Pause for discussion. Once the comments are over]:

4) Now tell us what your intended application is of that Truth.

[Have the **group** evaluate his application.]

- Did his application begin with the words “I will”?
- What was his “who”?
- What was his “what”?
- What was his “when”?
- What was his “where”?
- Did his application sound current or likely to happen ... or did it sound too “whenever”?

5) Now, pass your prayer slip to your prayer partner. This is the one who will be praying for you this week.

[Ask his prayer partner to lead the group in prayer for him right now.]

[Repeat the above steps (3) – (5) for each student. If time permits, you as the facilitator should also go through the process.]

A CHALLENGE (5 minutes)
(pages 51-53)

I hope you took some time to read “A Challenge,” pages 51-53.

[If you (the facilitator) **are willing** to continue meeting with this group, this might be a good time to ask if anyone would have an interest in joining you.]

[If you cannot continue meeting with this group, present the following]

I would like to end our meetings with a challenge that you start your own small group of 3-5 people.

- The makeup of this small band of believers could consist of your *family members*: you, your wife, and your children (if you think they are old enough to participate in something like this).
- Or you might form a small group made up entirely of *other believers* you know who are interested in maturing spiritually.
- And, of course, *this small group itself* could continue meeting. There would be no new skills to learn. You would simply continue doing what you have been doing.

If you would like to start your own small group, a Leader's Guide is available.

APPENDIX G: EVALUATION OF THE COURSE (pages 69-73)

Please turn in your evaluation of this course, pages 69-73.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Please contact the person for whom you are praying sometime this week.

- Ask how his application is going.
- Ask how his times of fellowship with the Lord are going.
- Remind him that you are praying for him.

This contact is intended to be a time of both encouragement and accountability.

Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

I have enjoyed meeting with you these past few weeks.

LESSON PLAN – GRADUATES

DISCUSSION (70 MINUTES)

Last Week's Applications (10 minutes)

- ? Would anyone like to voluntarily tell us how your application went this past week?
- What happened?
 - Were you successful?
 - How was it a struggle?
 - What would you have done differently?

[Their report on last week's application is highly important. Take extra time if needed.]

Discussion over Our Devotions (55 minutes)

Please turn to the key thoughts for the week and applications you wrote from _____. Instead of calling on you by name, I would like to ask for volunteers to present your key thoughts and applications to the group, one chapter at a time.

[Hand out prayer slips. Give them time to fill them out.]

[Assign prayer partners.]

[One at a time, each member reads his passage and reports on his key thought.]

(Afterwards, give other members time to discuss that passage.)

[Once the comments are over, he describes his intended application.]

[Ask him to pass his prayer slip to his prayer partner.]

[Ask his prayer partner to lead the group in prayer for him right now.]

Conclusion (5 minutes)

I want to remind you to contact the person for whom you are praying sometime this week to touch base with him.

- Ask how his application is going.
- Ask how his times of fellowship with the Lord are going.
- Remind him that you are praying for him.

This is intended to be a time of both encouragement and accountability.

At the beginning of our meeting next week, I will ask if anyone would like to voluntarily describe how his application went this past week.

Does anyone have any concluding comments or questions?

After the Discussion (~ 5 minutes)

Close in Prayer

- thanking the Lord for the truths we just learned
- for motivation & power to apply what we just learned
- for protection from demonic attack

“Let’s remember to invest some time each day in fellowship with the Lord.”

“Let’s also remember to pray for and encourage one another.”