

# Spiritual Leader's Resource

*For the Small Group Bible Study Leaders*

**Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,**

**“Whom shall I send?**

**And who will go for us?”**

**And I said,**

**“Here am I. Send me!”**

**Isaiah 6:8**

## **Preparing to Lead**

*Partnering with God to make a difference*

Would you like to know how you got here? **(You may think you know, but you don't!)**

I'm so glad you are reading this, and I thank you for making yourself available to God to be an answer to our prayers for leaders of this critical study. He has selected you and nudged you to accept His “calling.” Here is the prayer that God answered through your willing and open heart. Allow me to share with you just how that happened and what was going on behind the scenes. I think you will find it very interesting and validating. Because we are very limited as to the number of people we all know, we had to ask God to do what He had requested Moses to do in Numbers 27:18 *“So the Lord said to Moses, Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the **spirit of leadership**, and lay your hand on him.”* In short, God selected and brought you here as a direct answer to our prayers for Leaders. He is the one who tapped you on the shoulder. Thank you again for saying “yes” and making yourself accessible to God. You have the *“Spirit of Leadership”* identified in that scripture, or you wouldn't be reading this right now. Regardless of how you may personally feel, any doubts you may have, God has tapped you. There are few, if any, studies that target the core aspirations in people's hearts like does this approach. It just doesn't get any more personal than these topics, and each topic contains the seeds of the future of a human being. And the seeds that they choose to water, and feed will determine the kind of person they will ultimately become. And into that “seed” planting and watering process, you have now stepped. Your prayerful guidance of these “readers” makes you a partner with Christ in the most noble work on planet earth - the growing of a Christ-follower! You are playing a privileged role to peoples' “Emotional Jail-Breaks.” You will be there every step on their journey to their increasing emotional freedom. You are playing a crucial role in

moving them toward being set free from some of the most debilitating and defeating emotions of which Satan has kept them bound and daily crushes their spirit. May God richly bless you in your leadership. Here are five encouragements for you to remember along the way. Reproduce these and put them where you will see them throughout your day. Perhaps even commit to memorizing these scriptures. Make this wisdom a part of your heart:

1. Be invigorated to give it all you got! Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV. "*Whatever your hand finds to do, **do it with all your might**, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.*" Don't let this opportunity to be a positive influence on people's lives, pass you by. This is your time to yield precious fruit, optimize it to the fullest! You and they will be forever glad you did. Our time on earth is short. At some point, we will no longer have the opportunity to serve. Now is your time.
2. Don't get disheartened with some of your people's progress or the lack there of. Being a leader isn't always easy, but don't give up. II Chronicles 15:7, NIV. "*But as for you, be strong and **do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.***" The day will come in heaven, when these people participating in your study will be the greatest source of your heavenly joy! Lean in to any discomfort as the work of planting a seed is work and can be challenging.
3. You will never be alone as you lead this study. A good leader is always listening to and for God's directions. Isaiah 30:21, NIV. "*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, **your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'***" God is so thrilled to be partnering to you. I promise you that when the study is done, you will look back at these days as one of the highlights of your stay on planet earth when you and God worked hand-in-hand to set people free to be what God designed for them to become!
4. There is always help for you as the leader when, at times, you feel inadequate. James 1:5, NIV. "***If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God** who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*" There are three reasons why He is anxious to hear and answer your prayers: a) He loves you, b) He loves what you are doing, and c) He loves who you are doing it with!
5. Remember that your role is NOT to harvest, but to plant. A good leader must exercise patience. Proverbs 16:32, NIV. "***Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.***" There are great victories in the futures of your participants that you will never witness until heaven. For now, just plant, water and believe!

Know that the Holy Spirit is in your meetings and showing up in different ways. Know that a miracle is happening. Also know that this may mean, the unpredictable may need room in your carefully planned meeting or calendar. Give yourself permission to NOT complete an agenda in one meeting as you may need a continuance to the next meeting. This experience may not fit neatly in to our perfectly planned marching orders of agendas over 12 weeks. Set this expectation with your community.

Know that vulnerability and self-disclosure starts with you. Your authenticity and courage to share will open the doors for others. Prepare your stories to share for each meeting when needed. Read the activities and do your own work before-hand. Here is a quote from Brene Brown to lean on:

**“Vulnerability sounds like *truth* and feels like *courage*.**

***Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness.*”**

Thank you again! I wish you God Speed and I already know that God will richly bless you and your leadership, both now and in eternity!

LaVon

Why the Bible Study you are leading is the very best way to develop people for Christ (This is what theologians call Sanctification)

Many people are not aware of the dangers of being over-exposed to too much truth in too little of time. But there are real hazards to be avoided. I know it sounds funny, but here are some caution areas where you could be at risk when people reading a book like ***Untangling the Seven Desires of Your Heart***, alone or in some airplane seat. Here are the principles upon which your small group study is built and why it can be so very successful in transforming lives.

- Caution #1: ***Becoming educated beyond your level of obedience.*** Often, we go to church and hear good truth that is piled onto the truth we heard last week which was piled on top of the truth heard the week before etc.... And each time we hear new truth, we can often forget about, and stop trying to obey the truth we had heard the week before.

As the gap between what we are “doing” (obeying) and what we are “knowing” (Learning), widens, we can get a form of **Spiritual Schizophrenia** where we will find ourselves reading and feeling emotionless about the wonderful, lifechanging new truths. This is because we are emotionally exhausted and feeling guilty from knowing so much more than we are currently doing and we become emotionally numb to acquiring even more new truths. We cannot allow ourselves to get excited about more new truth that we know that likely will not be integrated into our daily lives. Don’t let this book or any book “educate you beyond your level of obedience.” We have a choice that must be made: either slow down the intake of new “truth” so we can assimilate it into our lives, or speed-up the process of allocating a Holy Spirit led deliberate response as to what we are learning and what should become our obedience focus. In some ways, the first members of the emerging church in the first century had a very different experience than do we today. When they met, they didn’t yet have a Bible, or a recorder, or radio/TV so it was a bunch of people sharing what they heard Peter, or Paul saying, and they talked about these brand-new truths in an excited and embracing way. Each person would share what they heard and what they felt it meant. And they often met on a daily basis for these types of “hear say” discussions in their homes.

*“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.” Acts 2:46,47 (NIV)*

Contrast that to us today, When I'm not traveling, I may hear 2 sermons a day on the car radio just driving to and from our corporate office. In today's wired world, we live with an abundance of opportunities for hearing New Truth, so this problem is greater for us today than the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians. With so much "truth" instantly available, it forces us to have to make more Holy Spirit guided decisions as to which "truth" does He want us to focus on at this time in my life. While it is a blessing to have so much truth available to us, it comes with a responsibility to become more prayerfully discerning with a willing response.

The Bible Study you are leading enables your participants to go at a learning pace that is conducive to transformative application. They will be engaged in multiple conversations concerning multiple implementation approaches in their lives. They can confront each other, motivate each other, challenge each other, and pray for each other. And they can do all of this with one truth at a time! That is why your small Group Study can be so effective and used by God in a big way!

- Caution #2: ***Truth heard once and not acted upon can be worse than truth never heard at all.*** In much the same manner that a flu shot works or a Smallpox vaccination works, where you get a "little" flue so your body will build up an immune system against all flu in the future, the same can happen when hearing truth and not embracing it, obeying it, or believing in it, can actually immune you to ever really hearing it and acting on it in the future. When you hear it again, it's old news and you say, "I've heard that before," and dismiss it. Satan is hoping you will be overwhelmed by all that you are hearing and is counting on your inaction and future dismissal. By not acting on new truths, you may have ruined it for your future. Now, the truth and its power, may have been lost to you, perhaps, even forever.

That is why you are cautioned to be sensitive to the speed at which you are traveling on this ***Journey to Emotional Freedom.*** Whereas, this study was designed to take 12 weeks, please be free to follow the pace of your participants. I know we live in a "hurry-up" world, but your participants deserve and need plenty of Love-Time, Prayer-Time, Holy Spirit-Conviction Time, Self-Reflection time and Truth-Processing time. Monitor the pace at which God is working in and through your group. When there is an Ah-Ha moment when and where Truth collides with life, hit the paus button and trigger a transparent discussion so your participants have a chance to "own" the new truth and accept a responsibility to introduce it into the way they live.

- A Biblical Directive. In Luke 11:28 Jesus replied, "***Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.***" If the two academic principles above were confusing, this Biblical Directive is very simple and clear. The goal is not to finish the book but to grow in our likeness of Jesus. Hear and Obey is that one-two punch that will make your Bible Study transformative in nature.

So, given these two cautions plus the Biblical directive, here are some of my heart-felt suggestions for you to consider as you begin your Bible Study group:

Please:

- Don't allow your participants to just read the book to check a box indicating that they've completed it and then go on to the next book on their list. Encourage them to make it their goal to be greater than just finishing another book. It is like going to church, you want them to come out of church closer to Christ than when they went in. Consider letting that be your prayer when leading this study. You want every participant to come out of the study more emotionally free than when they began.
- Don't be in a hurry when you are leading the study, allow God to stop you for essential periods of reflection and discussion. If you are not regularly hitting the pause button, you are probably rushing the study way too fast. I've provided you more activities than you can complete in a session. Select the ones that are the most suitable for your group and prioritize them accordingly.

Please:

- When a new Love-Gap concept comes up and is revealed as a problem area, pause to discuss and pray it into your participant's lives. Some of these truths may be very hard truths for them to hear. Don't let them run nor hide from them. Give God a chance to "love" them into their lives.
- Do ask the people reading the book with you, hard questions in love as to how they are planning on applying these new "break-through" concepts into their lives. Invite them to ask you difficult questions in return. Let the verse in Proverbs 27:17 become a reality where it says, "As **iron sharpens iron**, so one person **sharpens another**." Let the Sparks fly, if done in love that is how growth happens.
- Do pray that your participants will understand God's love in a new and meaningful way each step of the way on their journey. Chances are, that they may have never read a book that had so much "love" in it. (The Bible, of course, being the greatest exception of all time.)

Remember, this book was written to advance the apostle Paul's directive in II Thessalonians 3:5 where it says, "May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance." By both design and intent, every chapter in this book was deliberately written to overwhelm your participant's hearts with His fresh inspiring love. You and they will discover new ways, new reasons, and new places to experience God's love. Enjoy the journey and be ready to be amazed to find out just how much love on which you and they have been missing out.

LaVon

