

Small Group Guide

WHY PRAY? TO BE RESTORED

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. Jim Shaddix

December 16, 2012

Luke 22:31-34

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

***Welcome**—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.*

***Review**—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.*

***Prayer**—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.*

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

What Satan does...

- He aggressively tries to destroy our faith.
(Luke 22:31; cf. Job 1:6 – 2:10; Zechariah 3:1–5; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10)
- He cleverly exploits weakness in our faith.
(Luke 21:33)
- He ultimately wants us to deny our faith.
(Luke 22:34; cf. Luke 22:54-62)

Why Jesus prays...

- He sovereignly orders our faith.
(Luke 22:31; cf. Job 1:6 – 2:10; Zechariah 3:1–5; Romans 8:34)
- He faithfully preserves our faith.
(Luke 22:32; cf. Romans 8:26-27; Hebrews 7:25)

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- He graciously restores our faith.
(Luke 22:34; cf. Luke 22:54-62; John 21:15-17; 1 John 2:1-2)

How we respond...

- We praise our faithful High Priest.
(Luke 22:32; cf. John 17:1-26)
- We repent of our faithless living.
(Luke 22:32; cf. Romans 2:4; 1 Peter 3:9)
- We strengthen the faith of others.
(Luke 22:32; cf. Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 18:23; Romans 1:11; 16:25; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:2,13; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 5:19-20; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 1:12; 1 John 5:16)

Message Summary

Satan actively tries to undermine our faith by exploiting existing weaknesses in our faith. The Devil's fundamental goal in this is to destroy the believer's faith and to get them to deny Christ. However, as our High Priest and advocate before the Father, Jesus exercises His sovereign control over the events and circumstance of our live in order to preserve our faith and to restore us. Jesus prays for the church to persevere against Satan's attempts to destroy our faith. Ultimately, Jesus graciously provides the healing and restoration that only He can give. As the church we respond to this glorious reality by praising Lord Jesus as our faithful High Priest and by repenting of attitudes and actions that separate us from Him. Being a community that has found hope and restoration in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we pray to strengthen the faith of others.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Pastor Jim began by saying there are times in the lives of believers where it is easy to think that God is not acting how he is "suppose to act." For many, the recent tragedy in Newton, Connecticut might be one of those times. How does the Bible address these questions? How might God be using difficult circumstances to strengthen our faith and to draw us to Himself? Take a moment to pray for those affected by this tragedy. Pray that the church in Newton will be able to strengthen the community around them and to glorify God in the midst of this tragedy.
- Satan actively tries to attack our faith. In what ways may Satan be attacking your faith and the ministry of the church around you? How should we respond to this? How can you help those around you who are being attacked by Satan?
- Read 1 Peter 5:8 and Revelation 10:12. How does the Bible describe Satan? Do you see him this way? How does knowing Satan's character help us resist his attempts to destroy our faith?
- Read Luke 22:31. Satan tries to remove our confidence from our faith, but he acts under the sovereign control of God. How does this knowledge help us resist Satan's attempts? How can we guard against these attacks? Are you relying on Jesus' sovereign ordering of your faith? How so?
- Luke 22:33 reveals a soft spot in Peter's faith. What are the weak areas in your own faith where you may be tempted to be over-confident? Why is it good to be aware of these areas?

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- Pastor Jim stated that one of Satan's greatest weakness is that he is short-sighted and underestimates the prayer life of Jesus. How does knowing Jesus has prayed for us aid you as you struggle against Satan's attacks?
- Read Luke 22:54-62 and John 21:15-17. How can the enemy's attempts to obliterate our faith turn into an instrument to persevere and strengthen our faith? Share with the group a time this has happened in your own life.
- Read Luke 22:34, 60-62. Jesus uses a tangible event in Peter's life to restore Peter's faith. Like the rooster in Peter's story, are there any events or people in your own life that God could be using to call you to repentance? Take a moment to praise God for His restorative care!
- Why does knowing Jesus has prayed for us and desires to restore us beckon us to turn away from sin and towards Him?
- Jesus saw Peter's restoration as a means for him to strengthen others. Do you think of restoration in this way? How do we strengthen others?
- What are some areas in your own life where you may be denying Jesus in thought or in action? How can your small group pray and strengthen you through this?
- How did Peter respond to Jesus' restoration? Think of the times when you have repented and been restored to Jesus. Did it make you shrink back, or did it motivate you to embrace the grace you received and to extend it to others?
- Who are the people in your family, your work, or your community who need to be strengthened in faith or in deed? How can you support them this week?
- At the end of the sermon, Pastor Jim mentioned two types of prayer: praising Jesus as our faithful High Priest and repenting of our faithless living and seeking restoration. Which of these two prayers do you need to pray this week? How can you incorporate these prayers into your life over the next week?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from our worship guide)

- *Church:* Pray our faith will not fail, even in the midst of opposition and persecution. Praise God for fulfilling so much Scripture and prophecy through Jesus Christ. Pray will not enter into temptation. Pray for God's will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Ask God to embolden our witness of the gospel to all those around us. Praise Jesus for His intercession on our behalf at the right hand of the Father.

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- *Local:* This week we are praying for one of our partners in Fairfield, Restoration Academy. Restoration Academy is a Christian School that reaches out to urban, low-income children and teen and provides a quality Christ-centered education. It also seeks to provide role models and mentors to students who often do not have such adults in their lives. Many staff members have moved into the community to further relational impact with students 24/7 and reach the whole community with the gospel. We are also praying for Hunter Street Baptist Church and Buddy Gray, Pastor.
- *Global:* This week we are praying for Brook Hills Mid-Termer, Adam P., serving in the Middle East. Adam is serving on a team engaging Muslims through sports camps and by teaching English at a local university. He is serving in a very difficult and highly secure area for the next year. Join us in praying for Adam P. and his team this week. We are also praying for our short-term team serving in East Asia.