PREPARE for 2019

December 30, 2018

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Take some time to review 2018 together. What did you learn? How did you grow? What did God do in your life? What were the highlights? Where were the dark moments?
2. Now look ahead to 2019. Ask the group to write down their hopes, dreams and goals for the new year. These can be spiritual, physical, relational, mental, educational, etc! [Consider having the group break up into 2’s to pray for one another.]
3. READ the WORD:
	1. **Psalm 119:105**
	2. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
	3. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7**
	4. **Matthew 4:4**
4. How committed are we to being people of the Word? Though not everyone is a Bible scholar, the Bible makes it clear that it is to be read by everyone. Consider your current knowledge of and time spent in the Bible. No matter where you are, you can grow! Not even Bible scholars were born knowing it all, they had to practice and commit and learn.
5. NEXT STEPS: What would it look like for each of us to make 2019 our best Bible year ever?
	1. Discuss practical steps for individuals:
		1. Do you have a translation that is easy to understand?
		2. How can you make time DAILY to read the Word and pray?
		3. What kind of tool will help you know where to start? (App, reading plan, devotional book, etc)
		4. What kind of accountability do you need? (text every day or week, etc)
	2. Discuss practical steps for the group:
		1. What have we spent most of our time on in the last year?
		2. How will we commit to the Word and to prayer during our time together?
		3. Will we read a book of the Bible together? Memorize \_\_\_ verses together? Commit to prayer partners for \_\_\_\_ weeks/months?

**Prayer Thought:** New Year’s resolutions are easy to make and difficult to commit to. Spend time committing yourselves to the Lord. Perhaps have each individual write their own prayer of commitment to the Lord, then offer one for the group. \*Remember, it isn’t guilt or shame that binds us to our commitment, it is the love and grace of our Savior Jesus Christ!

BIBLE HACKS: An Overview to Reading & Understanding the Bible

Pastor Derek Sanford

January 6, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, what is something you learned about the Bible?
2. Which of the genres of the Bible do you find easiest/most difficult to read and understand?
3. Why is it so important that we understand the usefulness of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)?
4. Last week we discussed practical steps that we can take as individuals and as a group to make 2019 the best Bible year ever. Did you take one of those steps this week? Share what was surprising, challenging, rewarding, etc.
5. Leader: choose one of the familiar passages from this week’s reading plan and prepare yourself to study it with your group. [For suggestions on resources, check out the RESOURCE button on [www.whoisgrace.com/read](http://www.whoisgrace.com/read).]
	1. **John 3:1-18**
	2. **Psalm 23**
	3. **1 Samuel 17**
	4. **Matthew 14:13-21 and 15:29-38**
	5. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-15**

**Next Steps:** Ask: How can we apply the truth of God’s Word that we studied tonight to our lives?

\*”The Story of Scripture” Biblical studies event is this Saturday, January 12th. Both you and your group are encouraged to attend! There will be a keynote speaker and breakout sessions appropriate for all Bible learners. Register at [www.whoisgrace.com/events](http://www.whoisgrace.com/events)

**Prayer Thought:** Use what you learned together about the Lord to praise Him, confess sin, thank Him, and ask Him for things you need. [Consider having partners pray together, lead a time of reflective prayer by praying an opening sentence for each part and giving silence for the group to pray quietly, or pray “popcorn” style and allow everyone an opportunity to pray out loud.]

**Memory Verse:**  Did you start memorizing one of the verses from last week? Continue to work on it!

LEADER: The Bible Hacks sermon series will explore a few literary genres of the Bible. For more information, check out the “[How to Read the Bible](https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/240001)” videos from The Bible Project on Right Now Media.

BIBLE HACKS: Narratives

Pastor Derek Sanford

January 13, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. When you “Find your chair”, where do you spend the most time reading and studying, the Old or New Testament? What is the percentage breakdown? Why is it this way?
3. The Bible is largely made up of Narratives, especially the Old Testament. Proper interpretation and application of narratives is built on the principle that such scripture is historical, theological, and literary in nature and not just stories but historical accounts. When you read scripture do you view it through the lens of it being a 100% truthful historical document? If you don’t view the Bible as 100% true, why not? If you do view it as 100% true, then why is it so difficult to live out?
4. Watch the following video: <https://jdgreear.com/blog/jesus-from-genesis-to-revelation/> What is the point of scripture?
5. Read **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, A growing number of Christians gravitate toward reading only the New Testament. How does this passage and the above video speak against only reading the New Testament?
6. Read **Exodus 12** together and apply the 3 Question Method: What does this say about God? About mankind? About the relationship between God and mankind?

**Next Steps:**

If you are not already doing so, follow the READ plan at whoisgrace.com with your accountability partner. It is utilizing the following Study Method:

* What does it say about God?
* What does it say about mankind?
* What does it say about the relationship between the two?

**Prayer Thought:**

This week focus on praising God. As a group, spend some time speaking some of or all of these Psalms of Praise out loud: Psalm 8, 65, 76, 100, 111, 146, 150, any others you prefer

BIBLE HACKS: Poetry

Pastor Derek Sanford

January 27, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. This week Pastor Derek talked about the use of poetry in the scriptures. He taught that the book of Psalm is full of poetry. Do you have a favorite verse or chapter in Psalm? If so, share with the group and give a few examples of why. Do you have a favorite poem that isn’t from the Bible? What captures you about that poem?
3. **Read Psalm 23**. What stands out to you most in this popular chapter of Psalm? How does the descriptive language help you connect deeper to God?
4. In his sermon, Pastor Derek gave some insight on how to cry out for God’s presence. The first thing is to be honest about the problem. Can you identify the problem within Psalm 23?
5. The second step in crying out to God is to lay out your petition. In what verses in Psalm 23 do you hear the author laying out the petition? What are some examples of symbolic language in this passage?
6. In what ways does the author praise God at the end of this passage?
7. Pastor Derek’s big idea this week was that when God seems distant, we should cry out for his help. How can you see/hear God drawing near to the author throughout this passage?

**Next Steps:** When you find yourself crying out to God, apply the same method that is found in the poetry books in Scripture: Be honest about the problem, lay out your petition, and saturate your cries with praise.

**Prayer Moment**: Have the group physically spread out in the space you’re in. Ask them all to find a comfortable posture of prayer (kneeling, hands uplifted, etc). Have a group member read Psalm 23 again as the prayer over the group.

BIBLE HACKS: Letters

Pastor Derek Sanford

February 3, 2019

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Derek stated in his message that there are 4 keys to reading letters. We will be focusing on these 4 keys as we are working through the Book of **Jude** during this group time.
3. Key 1: CONTEXT IS KING Read the following link to get some context of Jude:

<https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-jude/>

1. Key 2: READ THE WHOLE LETTER IN ONE SITTING Take time to read through the entire book as a group now.
2. Key 3: WITH PROBLEM MESSAGES – CONSULT OTHER SCRIPTURE Go back and identify the scriptures that you are unsure of and need some explanation to. Take time to watch the following video, and write down the other scriptures he references to help bring understanding to the book of Jude. After the video is over read those scriptures and discuss.

<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/VideoElement/230235>

You can also look to the following commentary for assistance

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/jude-1/>

1. Key 4: LOOK FOR UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES UNDERNEATH Discuss as a group what some of these are.

**Next Steps:**

If you are not already doing so, do the READ page at whoisgrace.com and discuss it with you accountability partner. It is focusing on the SOAP study method:

S – Scripture

O – Observation

A – Application

P – Prayer

**Prayer Thought:**

Take time to pray for The Holy Spirit to continue to speak to you through the Word of God, and that you have an ear that recognizes His voice and a heart that recognizes His prompting.