



Week 1 Study Sheet

Excuses

Consider The words, “God, I can’t do that!” are the refrain of many notable faithful servants. “I am not eloquent in speech” - Moses (Ex. 4:10). “I don’t come from a good family” - Gideon (Jg. 6:15). “I don’t have enough followers” - Saul (1 Sa. 9:21). “I’ve done some bad things” - Isaiah (Is. 6:5). “I don’t know enough” - Jeremiah (Je. 1:6). Each of these excuses are found on the lips of key leaders throughout Israel’s history. Our excuses often come from our fears. Our fear of failure, ridicule, or loss. God invites us to move past our fears to fulfill his purpose in our life. Some of our most fearful moments in life can be transformed into our most faithful moments if we will stop making excuses and remember God’s promise to us, “Fear not, for I am with you” (Is. 41:10 ESV).

Pray Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

Read [Exodus 4:1-17](#)

Observe

- Who are the characters in this story? What situation is being addressed through their interaction?
- What themes repeat in this story? What statements stick out and why?

Interpret

- Why does Moses make excuses? How does God address Moses’ request?
- Why would God choose Moses to perform these miracles?

Apply

- Have you experienced doubts or struggles when God asked something big of you? How did God help you through the situation?
- How can you use Moses’ story to overcome the temptation and habit of making excuses?

Read [Joshua 1:6-9](#)

Observe

- Who are the main characters of this passage? What is the context of this event?
- What words or phrases are repeated?

Interpret

- What is the connection between obedience to the commands and success?
- How can obedience to God’s Word help overcome our excuses to follow God’s will?

Apply

- How can Joshua’s story help you overcome fears? What words can you apply and rehearse in your prayer life this week?
- What steps of obedience to God’s commands can you take this year? (*Ex. Declare your faith through baptism, read the Bible daily, pray persistently, serve others, be encouraged through a biblical community, give to God’s kingdom work, etc.*)

Practice Download the YouVersion Bible App and start the Breakthrough reading plan through the Book of Luke as you form the healthy habit of studying God’s Word. (*Reading plan available January 6, 2023*).



Week 2 Study Sheet

Cynicism

Consider

In 1637, French rationalist René Descartes famously asserted, “I think, therefore I am.” This small phrase started a philosophical revolution that still impacts us today. Instead of willfully accepting truth when it’s presented to us, we tend to be cynical and prefer to determine our own view of truth. We echo Pilate’s words to Jesus, “What is truth?” (Jn. 18:38 ESV). Skepticism is considered a virtue, and optimism is viewed as naivety. God’s people are no strangers to cynicism, immediately after being delivered from Pharaoh’s army they questioned Moses and suggested that life would have been better if they stayed in Egypt. The prophets of the Old Testament could have been consumed by cynicism, yet their message of hope was clear, “As for me, I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me” (Mc. 7:7 NLT).

Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

Read

[John 20:24-31](#)

Observe

- Who are the main characters of the passage?
- When does this story take place in the timeline of John’s Gospel?
- What words or phrase stick out or repeat in the story?

Interpret

- Why did Thomas struggle to believe?
- What can we learn from how Jesus addressed Thomas’ doubt?
- How did Jesus restore Thomas’ hope?

Apply

- How can we wrestle with doubts in a healthy way?
- How can we avoid or combat cynicism in our life?
- How has God met you and given you hope in your times of doubt?

Read

[2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#)

Observe

- What words repeat in this passage?
- As Paul addresses the church at Corinth, what sticks out in this passage?

Interpret

- What does it mean that we are “being renewed day by day?”
- What “momentary troubles” was the church in Corinth facing?
- What are the “eternal things” Paul points the church to focus on?

Apply

- What can you do to focus your thoughts on eternal things?
- How can God’s work in your life help others in their times of trouble?

Practice

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Week 3 Study Sheet

Lying

Consider

Lying. We have all done it. Maybe we caught a tiny minnow that became a giant trophy-sized catch in our excitement. Or, for the sake of hyperbole, we may have embellished a story to make it more interesting. It's possible we hid the truth in hopes of preventing someone we cared about from experiencing pain. But guess what, a lie with good intentions is still a lie. Lies serve as life's Photoshop. No matter how pretty they may make a situation, the situation is still not real. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines integrity as "the quality or state of being complete or undivided: completeness." It defines a lie as, "an untrue statement with intent to deceive." If we really love others, why would we intentionally deceive them? The best story is always the complete story, and the intention of integrity is to make things whole. Proverbs reminds us, "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy" (Proverbs 12:22 NIV).

Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

Read

[Acts 5:1-11](#)

Observe

- Who are the main characters of the passage? What is happening in the story?
- Where and when does this story take place in the Book of Acts?

Interpret

- What makes Ananias' and Sapphira's actions morally wrong?
- Have you ever shared a half-truth? Is a half-truth a lie?
- Why would hiding things from the church result in such a drastic outcome?
- What did the church learn from Ananias' and Sapphira's story about deceitfulness?

Apply

- Can you recall a time when you lied and faced a consequence?
- How does lying affect our lives? How does it affect the lives of those around us?

Read

[1 John 1:8-10](#)

Observe

- What words or phrases repeat in this passage? What is the significance of the author using this repetition?
- What are the contrasting thoughts in this passage?

Interpret

- How would our sinful actions in the world make unbelievers think that God is a liar?
- What role does confession play in living a life of integrity?

Apply

- What can we do as believers to uphold God's character through our actions?
- What steps can you take to ensure you are living with integrity?

Practice

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Week 4 Study Sheet

Hiding

Consider

As a kid you probably received the warning, “Have this room clean or you will be grounded!” You assess the situation and conclude that your best option is to hide the mess. Under your bed seems like a good spot, but you quickly realize there is not enough room. The corner is too bright, but the closet is nice and dark. You can isolate and stuff your mess in there where no one will see it. Was this you as a kid? Maybe this is your kid. We all know that the mess did not disappear. Sooner or later the closet door will be opened. We operate in much the same way when it comes to our sins and failures. We hide. We don’t want anyone to know. We think that people can’t see our messes and mistakes. Or we think if we shove them away then they’re not real. We even go as far as to think that God doesn’t see our failures. But Jesus reminds us, “for everything that is hidden will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be brought to light” (Mk. 4:22 NLT).

Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

Read

[Genesis 3:1-13](#)

Observe

- Who are the main people in this story? Where and when does this story take place?

Interpret

- Why do you think Satan tempted Eve when she was alone?
- Is facing temptation more difficult when alone than with others?
- How do Adam and Eve try to cover up sin? How do we try to cover up sin?
- Why would Adam and Eve hide from God? Why do we try to hide from God?

Apply

- What dangers and pitfalls accompany isolation? What steps can you take to avoid isolation?
- What things in your life could you allow others to help you overcome?

Read

[Galatians 6:1-10](#)

Observe

- What thoughts stick out in this passage? What word or phrases repeat?

Interpret

- Why does Paul use the image of sowing and reaping in this passage?
- How does God respond to us when we are hiding from him?

Apply

- How can we help others from hiding?
- How can Spirit empowered communities help us from hiding?
- What does God do when we come out of hiding and allow him to heal those things we have tried to cover up?

Practice

Continue the Breakthrough reading plan through the Book of Luke as you form the healthy habit of studying God’s Word.



Week 5 Study Sheet

Anger

Consider

Uncontrolled outburst, hostile actions, and displeasing gestures; this is how we would define anger. Anger seems to be an underlining emotion of the world that we live in today. It's as if our society sits on a volcanic river of anger, never fully aware of when an explosion may happen. But anger can point to other issues in life as well. Anger can be an indicator of anxiety or depression. It could be triggered by past events in your life that you have not been able to overcome. Paul reminds the believers in the church at Ephesus that they should not go to sleep angry ([Ep. 4:26-27](#)). Paul was on to something here. How many nights have you tossed and turned stewing over this big emotion known as anger? James reminds us that we should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry ([Js. 1:19](#)). The best way to overcome anger is to seek out exercises and practices that will allow the grace of God to transform the hot lava of burning anger into cool streams of living water.

Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

Read

[Numbers 20:2-13](#)

Observe

- What is currently happening in Israel? Who are the main characters of the story?
- Why is there quarrelling among Moses and the people?

Interpret

- Why would Moses strike the rock twice instead of speaking to it as God instructed?
- What connections do you see between anger, impatience, and trust?
- What consequence did God give Moses for striking the rock twice?

Apply

- What lesson does this story teach us about anger and its outcome?

Read

[Ephesians 4:25-32](#)

Observe

- What words and phrases does Paul use to accompany anger?
- What phrases and words does Paul use as the antithesis of anger?

Interpret

- Why would anger and malice grieve the Holy Spirit?
- How can you be angry and not sin?
- How does anger affect the way we speak to others?

Apply

- What are tangible ways to be kind to one another and how does this help us work through anger?

Practice

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Week 6 Study Sheet

Escapism

Consider

We are a generation distracted; constantly searching for ways to disengage from the reality around us. Author and social critic Os Guinness calls smartphones “weapons of mass distraction” which constantly equip us to be distracted from the here and now. With our attention diverted, our soul becomes asleep, unaware of the events that surround us every day of our life. Pascal stated, “If man were happy, the less he was diverted the happier he would be.” By escaping the situations we need to face, we only prolong our date with destiny. What starts as an ant hill grows into a destructive mole hill that becomes more complicated and complex to face. Yet, like Pascal says, if we were to face our problems and shortcomings, instead of fleeing from them through devices and addictions, then true happiness would increase in our lives.

Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

Read

[Romans 12:1-2](#)

Observe

- What words repeat throughout the passage? What phrases stand out and why?
- What themes are present? Are there any contrasting thoughts?

Interpret

- How would you define “patterns of this world?”
- How does this passage identify escapism?
- What does Paul offer as exercise to empower us to not escape things in our lives?

Apply

- What steps can you take today to stop copying the behavior and customs of this world?
- In what ways can God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think?

Read

[Luke 6:20-26](#)

Observe

- What is the setting of this passage? Who is Jesus speaking too?
- What words repeat? Are there any contrasting thoughts?

Interpret

- Why does Jesus use blessings and woes for discipleship?
- What expectation did his followers have of him in their current reality?

Apply

- What sorrows or woes do you try to escape?
- How does Jesus encourage us to face our problems through this sermon?
- What reality does this teaching on blessings and woes help us to await?

Practice

Complete the Breakthrough reading plan through the Book of Luke as you form the healthy habit of studying God’s Word. Consider using YouVersion to begin your next personal study of God’s Word.