

REFLECTING HIM

LIVING FOR JESUS AND LOVING IT!

Leader's Guide Bible Study Coordinators and Facilitators

Provided by *Reflective Life Ministries*
www.reflectivelifeministries.org

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* *Reflecting Him Video Teaching Series* VIEWER’S GUIDE is FREE to download on the STUDIES page at www.reflectivelifeministries.org

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REFLECTING HIM LIVING FOR JESUS AND LOVING IT LEADER'S GUIDE

“...I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” —Ephesians 4:1-3

REFLECTING HIM PURPOSE

Reflecting Him: Living for Jesus and Loving It is a ten-week women's Bible study. Like Jesus' parables (which teach important lessons by creating visual pictures for the reader), *Reflecting Him* uses familiar objects to identify the connection between our physical and spiritual lives. God wants to be part of everything we do, and this study is designed to help you become aware of His life lessons twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Before you know it, you will be reflecting Him in ways you never dreamed possible.

REFLECTING HIM FOCAL VERSE

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

—2 Corinthians 3:18

This verse sets the stage for the *Reflecting Him* Bible study, as well as the accompanying ten-episode video *Behind the Veil* and our beautiful CD called *An Invitation*. All of these elements are based upon 2 Corinthians 3:18.

You might be asking yourself, “Why is this verse the focal point?” Jesus calls us to be His reflection here on earth. A reflection can't reflect if it doesn't have light pointed at it, or if something blocks the pathway of light. As Jesus removes the veil of disobedience, rebellion, disbelief, doubt, pride and other similar traits from our hearts, we see the glory of the Lord! Jesus is the only one who is able to remove this veil, that we may reflect Him to others.

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REFLECTING HIM VIDEO TEACHING SERIES

With much excitement RLM is proud to unveil the *Reflecting Him Video Series*! This film is divided into 10 segments to be shown during the 10 Weeks of the *Reflecting Him* Bible study. Each session consists of two parts.

- Part 1... An episode from the movie *Behind the Veil*. This production, written by RLM's playwright Robin Murray and produced by Jake Allen, is designed to bring to life the lessons learned from each week's study. The actresses and actors, all volunteers, gave their hearts to this project and for this we are forever grateful. You are going to love each week of this powerful film! In fact, this element to the study will keep the women anticipating the next Bible study group time.
- Part 2... The *Reflecting Him* author, Carla McDougal, connects the movie to each week's lesson. She also links the spiritual truths learned each week to the movie and the study. Her goal is to help women see God's hand at work in their own lives... everyday!
- **FREE VIEWER'S GUIDE** available at...
http://www.reflectivelifeministries.org/12_studies.html

REFLECTING HIM MUSIC—AN INVITATION

The music heard in the movie, *Behind the Veil*, weaves the film and *Reflecting Him* Bible study together. The eight songs are available on a CD called *An Invitation*. We encourage you to give the ladies an opportunity to order their own copies. Listening to these songs reinforces the importance of walking with Jesus. Singer-songwriter Cindy Vinson, Carla's sister, wrote and performed all the songs on *An Invitation*. When Carla went to Cindy to ask if she would write a song to go with *Reflecting Him*, Cindy shared these songs with her. Amazingly, she wrote them ten years before Carla even started the Bible study! As Carla listened, tears poured down her face, because it was as if Cindy had done the Bible study and then wrote the songs. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit could this have happened! We give glory to God for all He has done and is doing through this project! In the Weeks in Review section we suggest a song from *An Invitation* to play for your group each week. CDs can be ordered through our website www.reflectivelifeministries.org or purchased online and downloaded through www.digstation.com or www.itunes.com.

ABOUT THE REFLECTING HIM LEADER'S GUIDE

You will notice three main components to this leader's guide: *Bible Study Coordinator*, *Bible Study Facilitator*, and *Weeks in Review*. The Coordinator and Facilitator are two very important, but different positions. If your church or large organization selects and hosts women's Bible studies, someone has to manage all the details, and she should focus on the section titled *Bible Study Coordinator*. It may give some ideas you are already practicing, but perhaps you'll read something that can make your program even better.

If you are actually going to lead a group of women through *Reflecting Him* each week, please read the section titled *Bible Study Facilitator*. It has many useful suggestions and hints for leading a Bible study group. In fact, you might want to reread this part during the weeks you are leading your group.

Finally, the *Weeks in Review* section is designed to help you understand the purpose for each week's lesson. We have not specified which questions to ask or focus on during the discussion, because each group is unique. The goal of this segment is to help you, as the facilitator, hear from the Lord as you ask Him to guide you in selecting the right questions

Have fun reading through each section. The relationships formed between you and the women in your group will be special, and we pray you will ask the Lord to help you gather new thoughts, ideas, and insights while reading this leader's guide.

BIBLE STUDY COORDINATOR

Many churches and larger Bible study groups have a person or committee responsible for planning their Bible studies. As the coordinator or group handling the details, you have some important things to keep in mind, such as the choice of study. Also the start and ending dates, times, location, childcare arrangements, cost to attend (if any), administration, leadership meetings, leadership training, and small group selections.

- It is important to pray for God to reveal the Small Group Facilitators to you. It is vital to make sure these leaders have the same Biblical principles as your church. You would not want them to teach a theology that doesn't line up with your church's beliefs.

- A good number for a small group is between ten and fifteen. Larger groups may allow the women who are shy or fearful a place to hide. A small group connects the hearts of its members.
- As women, one of our greatest charges from the Lord is in Titus 2:4-5 “*Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*” The verse refers to mature women teaching the younger ones, and that is why we encourage you to put women of different ages in each group. For example, if you put the young moms all in one group, they will miss out on the wisdom from the ladies who have already “been there.”
- Having the Small Group Facilitators pray together is vital! Find time to make this happen each week, maybe by asking them to meet fifteen minutes before the rest of the women arrive. Pray as a group, for the details of the day or for any personal requests.
- As the Bible Study Coordinator, you are the problem solver, and you will deal with numerous issues. The best way to solve these problems is by praying and following God’s directions.
- Heads up... Childcare can be one of the biggest concerns. Be prepared ahead of time with guidelines for moms to follow. Help them understand what they need to do. Also, instruct the childcare workers in dealing with the children, and let them know exactly what is required of them.

BIBLE STUDY FACILITATOR

Thank you for responding to God’s call to facilitate a *Reflecting Him* Bible study. You may be leading a group for a church study, or perhaps you and some friends decided to work on the study together. Regardless of the setting, God called you to facilitate this group. He has so many exciting, as well as challenging, adventures ahead for you.

This *Reflecting Him* Leader’s Guide is designed to assist you in leading your group and is by no means an exhaustive manual. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit is your Counselor, Helper and Teacher, and He will direct you as you facilitate. He knows each lady in your group... her needs, her spiritual condition, level of understanding, life circumstances, physical state, financial situation

and more. You are there as a vessel for the Lord to use to encourage and connect the women in the group. It's humbling to realize God chooses to use us, even with our flaws and sin natures, to participate in eternity while here on earth.

Thoughts might be flowing like, "How can I lead a group? I am not worthy. I don't know where to begin. I'm not theologically educated. I am too young to lead others who are more spiritually mature." Oh, the enemy loves to shoot his fiery darts of fear and doubt in our direction.

Recognize the voice of uncertainty. You may have served as a Bible study facilitator before, or it may be your first time to lead a study. Some members of your group might have more Bible knowledge than you or more leadership experience, but that is not relevant. God chose you to be the facilitator of this study. It is very important to realize you are not called to be the teacher or someone with all the answers. Your role is to create interaction in the group through prayer, discussion, tenderness, love, grace, realness, encouragement and laughter.

Prayer is the key! Prayer is the linking element to your group. Think of how a chain is linked together to create strength, usefulness and unity. As the leader, you are like the latch connecting both ends of the chain to form a circle of unity. God calls you to be the connector for your group. Visuals are powerful tools for learning. Bring a chain to the leadership training or first class session and explain this concept. Ask the Lord to impact the hearts of the ladies with this idea.

You have the blessing to lead by example. Begin by praying even before you know who is in your group. One by one, as women join the group, you will know God placed each one there for a reason. It is fun watching God puzzle people together to accomplish His purposes!

This leader's guide was created to help you encourage and connect the women embracing this study. It is not a step-by-step instruction guide on what to say, or how to say it. It is merely a handbook with small group ideas and suggestions. So, let's get started.

TIPS FOR CONNECTING—

Women interact with each other better when they are part of a small group that is *real*. Realness begins with you as the leader... the more you take off your mask, the more others will take off theirs. When this happens it is easier to get to know the other members of the group, and easier to keep conversations going.

As the group leader, you are not expected to do all the talking. Your job is to pick out questions from the week's study that seem pertinent to your group. Read the questions and ask for answers. Don't automatically give an answer yourself to fill the silence... *Be still and know that I am God*. Sometimes in the silence God is doing His greatest work!

Let the women have time to think about what they wrote in their books, and then share. Encourage answers from more than one person so you can hear different responses. What seems like an easy answer for one person may have another person going in an entirely different direction. This is the beauty of small groups... learning and growing together.

Warning: Occasionally there is one person in a group who answers all the questions and, if I might say so, hogs the conversation. One answer to this dilemma is to talk with her one on one, letting her know how much you appreciate her. Share your desire to pull the other women into the conversation. Then ask for her help to do it. For example, say something like this, "I need your help in the group time. As I ask a question, will you please pray for the other women to have the confidence to share their answers?" Hopefully this will create balance in the links of your unity chain.

BE AN ENCOURAGER—

Encourage, encourage, encourage! This can't be emphasized enough. Paul's ministry is the perfect example of spurring others forward to live a life sold out to Jesus. For example, in his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul says "*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*"—Philippians 1:3-6. In His word God gives us everything we need to be an effective Christian leader. Below are some statements,

which may motivate your group to not only share, but also become excited to find out what comes next...

- *I am so thankful you are here today!*
- *Thank you for your insight to the question.*
- *Wow, I never thought about it like that. God really showed you a new way to look at this verse.*
- *Thank you for sharing this sensitive testimony with us. I know it was difficult, but the Lord gave you the strength to share your heart with all of us.*
- *What a tender way to view your situation.*

After your group has been meeting a few sessions, it will be easy to identify the women who are willing and often eager to give their answers. If no one says anything after a short period of silence, it often just takes eye contact with one person to start a conversation. If the same people seem to do all the talking, ask the Lord to show you someone else to call on. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting. Some women who are shy, or who lack confidence or assurance, don't want to be called on. You can't make anyone answer a question. But sometimes it just takes "asking" to draw someone into the conversation.

Beware of rabbit trails! Women love to talk. Keeping them focused on the week's study will be a challenge and goal for you as the group facilitator. Pray for the Lord to help you keep them centered on the material for the week. The enemy loves to distract!

Also, as the small group leader, ask the Lord to help the group laugh together. Laughter is medicine from the Lord that breaks down not only external walls, but also internal barriers. This is not a suggestion to laugh *at* each other, but laugh *with* each other. Laughter is not to bring a lighter side to the lesson, but to bring tenderness to the hearts of the group.

BE CREATIVE—

Ask the Lord to give you fresh and creative ideas each week. Break up the routine so the ladies in the group don't know what to expect. For example, have them each draw a piece of paper from a bowl. The numbers that match, like 1 and 1 or 5 and 5, sit by each other and share one on one what God taught them in this week's study.

Reflecting Him is a hands-on Bible study with tangible lessons. Bring props as visuals for the lesson. For instance, in Week 2 “Created for God, By God: Like Clay in the Hands of the Potter” bring some hand-made pottery. This is a powerful way to lead a discussion!

These are a few effective teaching tools that can break up the normal routine. Your creativity as a facilitator promotes strength in the group. Again, keep in mind, the Lord knows your group inside and out. Let Him be the creator for some exciting and new teaching methods each week. Oh, you are going to have so much fun!

Hopefully the questions, personal stories, and scriptures will springboard discussions about real life scenarios. The *Hidden Treasures* and *Reflection Pause* elements of each day’s study offer some good discussion questions. Don’t immediately try to solve anyone’s problems, but encourage a conversation where women are willing to open up and identify real life examples of what is being studied. If the words are flowing, and the women are enjoying some quality time with each other in Jesus’ name, don’t worry about getting to other questions. This study is all about seeing Jesus in everyday occurrences; and the conversation your ladies are having might truly be a reflection of Him.

PRAYER IS THE KEY—

Let’s review what we stated about prayer earlier in this leader’s guide:

“Prayer is the key! Prayer is the linking element to your group. Think of how a chain is linked together to create strength, usefulness and unity. As the leader, you are like the latch connecting both ends of the chain, to form a circle of unity. God calls you to be the connector for your group.”

Why is this statement mentioned again? Because prayer connects and unifies people. Isaiah 56: 7 says, “... *these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on the altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.*” Think of it this way... Each week God will bring your small group to the holy mountain and give your group joy as you pray together. Your group’s praises and

requests will be heard and accepted, as you pray for one another, for your Bible study group will be called “A Place of Prayer.”

Wow, prayer unifies! Prayer is mentioned over and over in this study. Once again, we encourage you to pray for your group of ladies before you even meet them. God put all of you together for a reason!

Here are a few suggestions to incorporate prayer into your group:

- Be creative in the way the group prays for one another. For example, at the end of your group time, have everyone pass her book to the right. The neighbor then writes her prayer request in that book on the first page of the next week’s study. Next, she writes her name at the top of each page of that week as a reminder to pray for her. This is a powerful way to teach the group to pray for one another!
- One of the biggest complaints about leading a small group is not having enough prayer time. In many cases, time slips away and there is not enough time to pray together. This is our suggestion and one that has proven to be very successful... *Pray* your prayer requests to God instead of discussing them in the group! This is a passion of ours. We have experienced so many Bible study groups and even prayer groups where we discuss the prayer requests for 45 minutes and then only have 15 minutes to pray about them. We believe this is a tactic the enemy uses to distract us from communicating with God about the issues. It would be like standing in the line at the grocery store and telling the person in front of you about a product you wish the store carried. She can listen, but can’t help you. By the time you get to the checkout counter you forget to mention it to the grocery clerk. Nothing is resolved! So, take the group’s requests straight to the Lord, the one who *is* the problem solver.
- Be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. There might be times during the session that you sense a need to pray right then. Don’t hesitate to take a moment to pray for a person or situation. Remember the Holy Spirit is your Guide... *“But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*—John 16:13-14

REFLECTING HIM WEEKS IN REVIEW

We suggest you begin each session with the video, which lasts 30 to 40 minutes. The movie episode from *Behind the Veil* and Carla's talk set the stage for the group discussions. Each week of *Reflecting Him* is divided into five days (lessons), supporting the central theme for the week. Each theme focuses on a different aspect of life and then compares it to a spiritual truth.

The daily lessons include five key elements:

- Introduction
- Scripture Excavation
- Hidden Treasures
- Celebrating Treasured Gifts
- Reflection Pause

Remember, this guide is designed to help you lead the group, not tell you what to say or not to say. That is the Holy Spirit's job! The review gives you weekly summaries and tips to help you guide the conversations. We suggest you mark the questions you feel the Holy Spirit leading you to discuss. There will not be time to go through all the questions, but the Lord knows your group of ladies and their situations, so let Him guide and direct your time together. We could pick out the questions we think are most important, but we are not in your group. That is why it is vital to pray over your group discussions and the ladies. Remember, you are the empty vessel the Lord is using to lead these women. Be ready for the great things He is going to do over the next ten weeks!

Throughout *Reflecting Him* we quote from the *New International Version (NIV)*, unless otherwise noted. We recommend using *Strong's Concordance of the Bible* to understand the Hebrew and Greek definitions. Remember, our goal is to help the ladies learn how to personally seek answers to the questions. The more they learn and understand the study process, the more they will personally hear from the Holy Spirit. It is such a blessing to watch this growth in someone's spiritual walk!

LESSON SUMMARIES

WEEK 1— REFLECTIONS IN LIFE: Images in the Mirror

The first week of the study is a *getting to know you* time. Years ago, God brought Carla through a tough time, and when she prayed for Him to show her how she could reflect His love to other women, He first led her into speaking to groups of women, and then into writing this Bible study. Please use this week to help your group get to know each other. The questions were created to make everyone think about her reason for doing the study, and what she expects to get out of it. It is very important to emphasize that at the end of Week 10 you are asked to review what you wrote in Week 1. Why? Because this allows you to see the growth and progress made over the ten-week span of studying God's Word. The review is a vital part to any Bible study!

TEACHING TIPS

- Begin praying for the Lord to connect your group in a sweet and powerful way.
- Pray for masks to be removed and realness to take place. It must begin with you. As you share your heart with the ladies, they will feel more comfortable to share what is going on in their own lives.
- Encourage them each time they walk in the door. Ask the Lord to give you fresh ideas each week. Listen to His prompting.
- Connect with the women during the week. Email or Facebook is a great way to keep in touch. We recommend setting up a private Facebook group that allows prayer requests to be posted throughout the week. The deeper the connections, the more the commitments! Oh, we would love to be in each group!
- *Behind the Veil* Question... How do the veils or masks we wear affect our walks with Jesus?
- At the end of either the large or small group time we suggest playing song #5 **Reflect Him to Me** from the CD *An Invitation*. This gives women the opportunity to become familiar with the *Reflecting Him* theme song, and think about how it pertains to them. Remember you can order the CD from the website—www.reflectivelifeministries.org or purchase through www.digstation.org.

WEEK 2—CREATED FOR GOD, BY GOD: Like Clay in the Hands of the Potter

Have you ever watched a potter creating something out of clay? First he takes the clay and kneads it into the right consistency, working it to get rid of the imperfections. He then puts it on his wheel, where pressure from his hands molds the vessel into the shape he wants. Each piece is completely different from any other. The final step is putting the pottery into the kiln where heat solidifies it, and turns it into a useful product.

In this week's lesson we want the readers of *Reflecting Him* to think about the different processes God uses on us, to get the end results He wants. We certainly feel the pressure as He molds us and tries to get rid of our imperfections. We are individuals different from each other, but created by the same God. And, we all know what it means to have the heat turned up at times. God creates situations to get our attention and to help us reach our full potential.

We compare the touch of the potter, the lump of clay, the spinning of the wheel, the imperfections of the clay, and the firing process, with God's creation of man. We also look at several different characters in the Bible to see how God formed and used them for His glory.

HOMEWORK RECAP

Focal Verse: Isaiah 64:8

We are the clay, You are the potter, we are all the work of Your hand.

DAY 1—THE TOUCH OF THE POTTER

Reminded us that God serves as the Creator of the pot.

DAY 2—THE LUMP OF CLAY

Looked at how we are the lump of clay that God is molding and creating.

DAY 3—THE SPINNING OF THE WHEEL

Compared the spinning of the potter's wheel that the potter centers the clay upon to us, as we experience the "spinning wheel" of life and reminded us how we need to stay in the center of God's will so WE don't fly off *our* potter's wheel.

DAY 4—THE UNIQUENESS OF IMPERFECTIONS

Showed us the uniqueness of each pot--not one handmade pot is exactly the same, just as we are not exactly the same.

DAY 5—THE FIRING PROCESS

Learned about the firing process that a pot goes through. What happens when a pot goes through that fire and comes out—pure beauty is beheld by the potter. We are reminded that God allows us to go through the fiery trials of life so He can mold us to reveal His glory.

TEACHING TIPS

What a powerful life analogy—The Pottery Process. This is the longest lesson of the ten weeks. There are a number of visuals you can use with this lesson...

- Bring in different types of pottery—children’s handmade vessels with their fingerprints still on the clay, broken vessels, flower vases, pitchers, cups, plates and more. Set them where the group can examine them while discussing the lesson. Notice their differences.
- Bring a lump of clay and a finished piece of pottery—compare the differences in the material.
- Ask the Lord to direct you in ways to make a creative impact on the group.
- The second question on page 14 under *Scripture Excavation*, states that Jeremiah 1:11-13 is an example of the heart of *Reflecting Him*. Why? Because the goal of this study is to realize the Lord uses things around us to teach spiritual life lessons. This question focuses Jeremiah’s attention on two familiar objects: an almond tree and a boiling pot. The almond tree blooms when other trees are still dormant. Paraphrased, God was saying, “I am the almond tree springing forward in a new season and you, Jeremiah, are a branch of this tree, coming to life while others are still asleep. Abide in the vine and you will experience the fruits.” What verses does this remind you of in the New Testament? Yes, John 15:1-8, where Jesus explains that He is the vine, and we are the branches. The boiling pot represented a reminder to Jeremiah of the calamity of Babylon. God used familiar objects then and still uses them today.
- *Behind the Veil* Question... Can you see one of the lessons from “Created for God, by God” in today’s episode?
- The suggested song from *An Invitation* to play for Week 2 is #7, **Who I Am**. The words in this song encourage us to seek the Lord’s will, and stay focused on His plans for our lives.

Your goal is to discuss each day of the study. So, allocate your time properly. For example, if you have one hour for the group time, give approximately ten minutes to each day's lesson. This shows consideration to those who have completed all five days of the lesson. They may have something powerful to share on Day 5. I am not suggesting "legalism," but finishing the race with completeness. Finally, end with about ten minutes of prayer. **Never** miss the prayer time! This connects your group in a powerful way.

WEEK 3—SENSES OF THE SOUL: The Touch, Aroma, Taste, Sight, and Sound of Jesus

Jesus touches all our senses. Everyday we use physical sensations to connect us with the world we live in. But God also breathed into us a soul, and when we accept Christ as our Savior, this soul becomes filled with the Holy Spirit. He opens our spiritual eyes and ears to understand His actions and teachings in the Bible. Walking with the Lord gives us an entirely different perspective on our daily situations.

Jesus' healing touch was an important part of His three-year ministry. Most times He touched someone to heal, but occasionally He was touched instead.

Think about a baby's taste buds, and compare their development to our daily walk with the Lord. As baby believers, everything is fresh and new and we are anxious to learn. But after a while, we sometimes lose the craving to spend time with Him.

Jesus' anointing is a sweet aroma that penetrates everyone and everything. As Jesus indwells us, His fragrance seeps out from us to those we encounter. Can our actions cause us to become a stench that repels others, instead of an odor that attracts them?

HOMEWORK RECAP

Focal Verse: Matthew 22:37

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

DAY 1—OPEN THE EYES OF MY SOUL

Matthew 6:22 *"The eye is the lamp of the body."* We learned about God's unique design of the human eye and the eye-brain connection, and how to look at life's events through *spiritual eyes*, rather than our *earthly eyes*.

DAY 2—A TOUCH TO THE SOUL

Luke 8:46 “*Someone touched Me; I know that power has gone out from Me.*” We studied our *sense of touch* and how, through faith, we can experience *the healing touch* of Jesus.

DAY 3—THE TASTE OF JESUS

Psalm 34:8 “*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*” We compared the four *senses of taste* (sweet, salty, sour, and bitter) against the backdrop of our daily walk with the Lord. We were reminded through James 3:1-12 how our tongues are the instrument of the Lord.

DAY 4 – The Aroma of Christ

2 Corinthians 2:15 “*For we are to God the aroma of Christ.*” We looked at how God designed our *sense of smell* and how we are the aroma of Christ to God. When we breathe Him in, we experience Jesus’ aroma, allowing us to reflect Him as a *sweet aroma* to others.

DAY 5 – Ears to Hear

John 10:27 “*My sheep hear My voice.*” We studied the *human ear* in all its complexities, comparing its actions and reactions to how we should act and react to the world around us, balanced through our knowledge of God’s Word.

TEACHING TIPS

In the introduction, a balloon is used to illustrate that each person is born with a need to be filled with Jesus. Nothing has the ability to fill that area of our lives except Him. Even before we are born, God designs us with this in mind. His Son brings us completeness. As we breathe in the Holy Spirit, we are filled with His freshness. The balloon represents our God given need for the only one who brings wholeness—Jesus!

Activate the senses in a variety of ways...

- Bring the senses alive by setting up a vase with fragrant flowers—sight, smell, touch
- Bring homemade unleavened bread—smell, taste, sight, touch
- Burn candles with a variety of scents—smell, sight
- Page 36 explains a “soul balloon.” Recalling Week 2, we read in Jeremiah 1:5 that God knew Jeremiah before he was in his mother’s womb. God created Jeremiah so that His purposes would be accomplished. God creates each of us with a will to *choose* Jesus as our personal Savior. Some try to fill that place with things of this world, which eventually

pass away. The only thing that fills us forever is a personal relationship with the King of the Universe... Kinsmen Redeemer... Savior of the World: **Jesus, the Son of God!**

- *Behind the Veil* Question... Because Karen was willing to “open her eyes” and read her dad’s letters, how was her heart touched?
- Listen to *When I Look at You*, #2 on the CD *An Invitation*. The chorus of this song says, “When I look at you and you look at me, Lord tell me what you see.” Wow, powerful words that will make us stop each day and reflect on God’s love for each of us... through His touch on our lives, the taste of salvation, the aroma of Jesus, hearing His Word and viewing His hand of mercy.

WEEKS 4—THE POWER SOURCE: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit

God sent Jesus to earth to be the spiritual power source of the world. As Christians, we depend on Jesus to sustain us. The Holy Spirit resides within us after we accept Christ as our Savior, and He becomes the power connector from believers to God.

God created the sun to sustain life on earth by providing light and heat. Life cycles, photosynthesis, weather patterns, and tides are made possible by the interactions of the sun and earth. This week we look at the sun, and the Son! How can we compare their impact on our lives?

HOMEWORK RECAP

Focal Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:18 *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

POWER SOURCE: · **Power** = Strength, authority · **Source** = Foundation, supplier, starting place God sent His power to earth in the human form of Jesus so HE could be the spiritual light of the world. Basically, the Holy Spirit is the power connector from believers to Jesus Christ and God.

DAY 1 – The Dawning Light

Genesis 1:4 *“God...separated the light from the darkness.”* We examined light vs. darkness and how light came into existence. Through Scripture, we were reminded that the Lord Jesus Christ

is the Light of the world---without Him in our lives the human soul exists in a state of confusion, disorder, and spiritual darkness.

DAY 2 – Here Comes the Son!

Genesis 1:16 *“God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night.”* We studied the sun’s formation and its characteristics, noting that it is located at the center of our solar system. Everything revolves around it. Spiritually, we need to be sure that we have not become the “center” of our world. If God’s Son is removed from the core position in our lives, WE become the center and chaos takes over.

DAY 3 – The Sun-Earth Connection

Habakkuk 3:4 *“His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden.”* The focal point this day was on the sun’s rays and how physical light affects the Earth’s *physical* existence. Likewise, Jesus affects all of the Earth’s *spiritual* existence. He is the “power,” released from God’s hand, to be the light and power of the world.

DAY 4 – The Sun Link

Jeremiah 17:7-8 *“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.”* We concentrated on how the sun sustains all life on Earth. For plants to grow and multiply, they need the sun’s energy. Spiritually, once a person accepts the gift of salvation from God, Christ’s light and warmth bring our souls to life.

DAY 5 – Light Up My Life

John 8:12 *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* We looked at the effects the sun has on human life through the study of how ultraviolet light works in the background...behind the scenes. Spiritually, God is often working in the background and behind the scenes in our lives.

TEACHING TIPS

This week is one of the more challenging lessons. It really requires some ‘digging in,’ but promises to be eye opening and life changing. There are powerful lessons each day, so allocate your group time wisely. Each day of *The Power Source* builds from the previous day’s message. Here are a few ideas to help you lead...

- Have your group bring some sunrise or sunset pictures. Share these with one another. You could even do a Power Point presentation with the photos.
- We suggest reading each day's **Reflection Pause** aloud before you move into the daily discussions. This will jump start the conversations, and also helps those who didn't finish their lessons.
- Here is a visual analogy to create: bring 3 different size balls, to give a hand's on illustration of a Solar and Lunar Eclipse. This example is explained in the video, but demonstrating it in real life is a dynamic way to grasp this life lesson. Remember, the sun is the Son of God – Jesus, the moon is a Believer, and the earth represents the world. In a *solar eclipse* the moon gets between the earth and the sun. We never want to get in the middle of the Lord's work in someone's life! In a lunar eclipse the earth blocks the sun's direct path to the moon, and the moon can't reflect the sun. When we allow the world to become our focus, we experience spiritual darkness. Oh, what great spiritual life lessons to learn from God's creations!
- Pray for the Lord to fill the women with fresh thoughts of God and His spiritual life lessons.
- *Behind the Veil* Question... Ryan realized he was missing out on something "really big". What prompted this realization?
- Listen to song #4, *Come to My Love* on *An Invitation*. This song mentions the glory of the sun or should we say the Glory of the Son!

WEEK 5—PRAYER FROM THE INSIDE OUT: The Holy Spirit Initiates Prayer

Prayer is a fundamental element in our relationship with God the Father. God wants us to come before Him with every part of our lives, not just when we are hurting, frightened or confused.

In Week 5 we draw an analogy between our prayer life with God, and our *Home Sweet Home*. Think about the one closet in your house that gets all the clutter and stuff you don't really know what to do with. You don't even like opening the door when you need to find something. Do you have anything hidden in your mind that you don't want God to discover? Your bedroom should be a haven where your body refreshes and refuels. How do you refresh your spirit? The kitchen is a busy place. Lots of love is expressed there, along with lots of work. Aren't our prayers also a

labor of love? When you are ready to relax at the end of the day, you might end up in the living room. Do you get warm and cozy thinking about God, resting and trusting He heard your prayers? And, what about those windows? Can you see through them to the beauty outside, or do the fingerprints and smudges sidetrack you? Do your circumstances distract you from a relationship with Christ?

HOMEWORK RECAP—WEEK 5

FOCAL VERSE— Matthew 6:6 *When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

DAY 1 – THE CLOSET

Psalm 69:5 *“You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from You.”* The closet...the place where we usually store junk...the place we put things so no one will find them...the place we hide those items we might want to forget about. Just as our *physical closets* hold and hide things, our *spiritual closets*---our hearts and minds---hold and hide things. Through our study of David’s sin with Bathsheba, we were reminded that God desires to enter every area of our spiritual homes to shine His light of love, grace, and mercy. We need only to open up the closet so Jesus can clear the clutter!

DAY 2 – THE BEDROOM

Psalm 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God.”* The bedroom is a place of peace and calm, stillness and rest. This day of study had us examine scripture to see how God desires for us to spiritually *rest* in Him, listen to His voice, and be receptive. We were reminded that God is not calling us to *do for Him* but to *be with Him*. Prayer is the key to resting and trusting that God is in control of all things.

DAY 3 – THE KITCHEN

Psalm 51:7 *“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”* Just as the *kitchen* represents an expression of *physical love*, prayer suggests a labor of *spiritual love*. We compared the dynamics of the kitchen to the attributes of a person dedicated to prayer. We focused on the Holy Spirit and His encouragement to pray for specific things. God desires that our prayers be thorough, as if we were preparing a feast. When we *labor* in prayer, it requires time, energy, devotion, stillness, love, selflessness, and listening skills.

DAY 4 – THE LIVING ROOM

1 Kings 8:11 “*For the glory of the Lord filled his temple.*” The *Living Room*—a place where we kick off our shoes, rest and relax. Within the *living room* of our hearts, we should exercise that same *rest, relaxing* in the Lord, while exercising faith that He has heard our prayers. We were reminded this week to wait for God’s provision, then step back and let go so God can do His work!

DAY 5 – THE WINDOWS

Acts 16:25 “*About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.*” Just like the windows in our homes, which become obstructed with dirt and fingerprints, the windows of our souls can also become blurred with distractions and daily activities, distorting our view of the Lord in our lives. We focus on the actual circumstance, instead of peering into what God is doing in our lives. Through a study of Acts 16, we are reminded that we need to base our joy on our relationship with Jesus, not on our circumstances.

We have the privilege of deepening our relationship with Jesus on a daily basis through our prayer lives. Focusing *inward*, by developing an intimate and daily prayer life with your Lord and Savior, results in an *outward* change in you. This week, we compared our *physical home* to our *spiritual home*...performing a little renovating during our tour.

TEACHING TIPS...

This is a fun week because we can all identify with each of these areas in our homes. You will find God used Day 1 *The Closet* to touch many of the women.

- Be prepared in case someone needs special prayer right in the middle of your group discussion time. Always be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s lead, and pray as you are led... especially since this week’s focus is Prayer.
- You might bring things from around the house: a soft throw, something found in the corner of your closet, kitchen utensils, etc. As you move through each day you can use these as visuals. Also, you can ask different women to bring an item to represent each room.
- Ask the ladies which room they feel most comfortable in... the bedroom, the kitchen or the living room. Does this room bring them closer to God?

- *Behind the Veil* question... We know it is never too late to pray. What did Karen place at the Lord's feet?
- Listen to song #6, *Kiss of God on An Invitation*. This is a true soaking song! Have the ladies close their eyes and imagine sitting in the living room at the end of a long day. If you will remember, the "living room" in this week's study represents trusting God and resting in Him after laboring through prayer. Oh, enjoy these moments as your group worships the Lord together!

WEEK 6—PRAYER FUELS FAITH: Prayer Energizes Faith into Action

Very Important: Skip the Intro in Week 6 due to a technical sound issue!

Faith is a big part of our Christian lives, and prayer goes hand in hand with our faith.

But you never thought you would learn about the gasoline supply chain in a Bible study! But the process from believing the geology that says oil should be where the geologist thinks it is, to taking it for granted that the car will run when you put gasoline in it, are examples of trusting the unseen. In between the geology and the gas tank are the drilling process, oil extraction, and distillation.

Our faith in God assures us He is right there with us every step of the way. We don't just throw up a prayer and receive an answer. We also need to prepare our hearts, dig into God's word, and move our faith into action.

HOMEWORK RECAP

FOCAL VERSE: Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

This week, we studied how *Prayer Fuels Faith*, comparing our journey into a life of faith through prayer, with the gasoline supply chain.

DAY 1 – TRUSTING THE UNSEEN (*Gasoline Supply Chain: The Exploration Process*)

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

Just as geologists must have *faith in the unseen* and *trust* their data, plan, and source when they speculate where oil might be found, we too are called to have *faith in the unseen* and *trust* what we know through God's word—OUR data, plan, and source for life. This day took us through

the great flood in Genesis. We read about how Noah exhibited *faith in the unseen* and *trusted*, obeyed, and acted when God told him to build the ark—without question or complaint.

DAY 2 – PREPARING THE HEART (*Gasoline Supply Chain: The Drilling Process*)

Hebrews 11:6 *Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him”*

We learned how expensive the drilling process is for geologists who *speculate* on crude oil. The Geologist must *trust* based on their data that crude oil will be found. If they only *speculated*, but did not *act*, discoveries would never be made. We were reminded, through a study of the life and calling of Abraham, that we, too, must place our *trust* the Lord and then put that trust into *action—faith action*.

DAY 3 – DIGGIN’ IN (*Gasoline Supply Chain: The Extraction Process*)

James 2:14... *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?* Day 3 had us “*digging for oil*” as we looked at the *extraction process*. First, there is *digging and discovery*, then, with the addition and continuous motion of a pump jack, oil is lifted to the surface. We compared this process to *digging* into God’s Word. When we are reading, searching, meditating, and applying God’s Word to our lives, it is *like striking oil!* Through a peek into the spiritual life and legacy of Moses, we witnessed that just a *shallow* relationship with God won’t do. Moses *dug in deep* with his whole body, mind, and soul.

DAY 4 – MOVE INTO ACTION! (*Gasoline Supply Chain: The Refining Process*)

James 2:14... *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?* There are a number of steps that crude oil goes through to end up as the gasoline we put in our vehicles. The crude oil is the *source* of many products...kerosene, plastic, tires, and crayons... none of which would be available if not for the *refining process*. This day, we looked at Gideon’s relationship with God. Thinking of Gideon as the crude oil tank (*the source*) and God as the boiler (*the refiner*), we learned how God *filtered* and *refined* Gideon, removing his fears and weaknesses, so He could be used for God’s purpose.

DAY 5 – THE OUTCOME (*Gasoline Supply Chain: The Pump*)

Hebrews 11:39, *These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.* Jesus is our final hero of faith. Just as the gas tank provides the *energizing fuel* to run our cars,

Jesus provides the *energy* we need to live out the Christian life. When we allow Jesus to *fill our empty spiritual tanks* every day, He gives us exactly what we need!

TEACHING TIPS

As we begin to see Jesus in everything we do, our relationship with Him may subtly undergo a change. Prayers of thanksgiving and requests for even the small day-to-day details of our lives weave their ways into our relationships with God. It's easy to pray for the big things... the serious things, but don't forget the small stuff!

- Ask for some examples of these “little” prayers. Are the ladies more conscious of *lifting up* even the smallest things to God?
- This week you focused on five Heroes of Faith. Ask which one they identified with the most and why is it important to learn about these Faith Heroes?
- Sometimes our head knowledge doesn't become heart knowledge. In *Behind the Veil*, who might have this problem?
- Listen to song #1 on *An Invitation – I Trust in You*. Faith requires trust. Not trust in yourself, but trust in God. He knows it all, and is in control of everything. This song inspires you to trust in Him, no matter what the circumstances!

WEEK 7—THE CONTROL SYNDROME: Consequences of Running Ahead

We know ultimate control lies with God. But as the saying goes, it is hard to *let go and let God!* It is human nature to charge forward doing whatever we think is necessary to solve a problem, or make something happen; but what a difference when we walk with Jesus on a daily basis.

The focus in this week's lesson is a garden. What does it take to make things grow? You can't just sit back and do nothing, while you watch and wait. First you have to make your plans. God certainly had His plan when He formed Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden. He challenged them to take care of His garden, the same way we are to cultivate the plans God has for us. Invasions and infestations can occur; perhaps choking out everything good in the garden, perhaps just causing some extra work. What weeds in your life might be zapping the energy from your walk with Jesus?

Some plants grow well in harmony with others, just like the Lord uses different people to bring strength to the body of Christ. Learn to lean on the strength of God’s family, and work together to reflect His teaching.

HOMEWORK RECAP—WEEK 7

Focal Verse: Galatians 5:16

“Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

This week we worked in the garden—a *physical garden* and *spiritual garden*. We prepared, planted, weeded, watered, and cared. Through our gardening experience, we learned how to handle life when things don’t go according to plan. We discovered how to live in the Spirit and not in the flesh. We witnessed how submitting to and trusting God’s will allows Him to accomplish His purpose and cultivate our lives for His glory.

DAY 1 – SOIL OF THE SOUL

Galatians 5:16 *“Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”* On Day 1, we observed the gardener planning her garden masterpiece, comparing the *time* she spent *cultivating* and *preparing* the garden, to our *time spent cultivating* and *preparing* our hearts. We were reminded that *spending time* in God’s Word, along with prayer, worship, and fellowship with other believers enables us to live our lives in total surrender to the Lord.

DAY 2 – THE WAITING GAME

Mark 4:27 *“Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.”* Today, the gardener, after much planning and preparation, got to plant her seeds. Once seeds were *sown*, the gardener watered them, then *waited* and *trusted* they would *sprout*. Comparatively, God asks us to *sow* the seed of His Word deep into our hearts. Then, we are expected to *trust* God and *wait*, as He *grows* our faith and knowledge of Him, entrusting us to be witnesses for His glory.

DAY 3 and 4—GARDEN INVASIONS—WEEDS & PESTS

Matthew 13:25 *“While everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat.”* Deuteronomy 28:38 *“You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it.”* Finally, the gardener planted seeds, which then germinated and broke through to the surface. Unfortunately, *weeds* appeared, crowding the plants and attempting to take over the entire garden. Much time and energy was spent *pulling* and *cutting* them. Then

insects appeared, attempting to *rob* the plants of nutrients needed to produce fruit.

The same thing can occur in our spiritual lives. The *weeds and locusts of life*, such as disobedience and a lack of repentance, can *crowd and rob* us of the good in our lives. We must give God access to *cut, chop, or pull* those weeds that tend to take over and *rob* us of our joy. Our method of prevention is to be *grounded* in God's Word, recognizing and *weeding out* the problems before they take over.

DAY 5—COMPANION PLANTING

1 Corinthians 3:6 “*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.*” On Day 5 we watched our gardener plant *companion plants*. By planting certain vegetables in the company of her other plants, she realized *enhanced growth* and flavor. This method also produced a *balanced environment* in her garden. This concept can be compared to God's family. We are God's gift to one another—ministry companions. Although we have different talents, abilities, weaknesses, and personalities, together we enhance and balance the body of Christ.

TEACHING TIPS

Just as our prayers may be undergoing a transformation, our need for taking charge of everything in our lives may be experiencing a renovation. In the *I want results now!* world we live in, it is often hard to sit back and wait for God's help with things. We know God is in control, but often this doesn't stop us from getting impatient.

- One suggestion is to bring two potted plants: one flourishing and one dead. Use this as an example throughout the discussion.
- Is there a gardener in your group? Did someone grow up on a farm? A woman who really knows how to grow things can add a whole new element to your group discussion.
- Remember, our focus this week is on releasing control to God.
- Ask the ladies if they can think of a time God put them in a place or situation where it took a while for them to realize God's plan. Hindsight is a good learning tool!
- *Behind the Veil* Question - It isn't just weeds in the garden that grow in every direction. What is happening in Ryan's and Ashley's lives? Are they wandering aimlessly, or looking for God's instructions?
- Listen to song #3 on *An Invitation* – **Draw Me Into You**. This is a wonderful song about drawing on the strength of God rather than relying on ourselves.

WEEK 8—ROADBLOCKS AHEAD: Caution - Diversions Along the Way

It is probably safe to say we all cringe when we are driving somewhere and find that a roadblock will cause us to detour from our intended route. Sometimes the roadblocks Jesus puts in our lives are as obvious as a hazard fence across the road, other times a small pothole might cause just a little bump in our plans.

When you get up in the morning you start making decisions, just like you make right or left turns when you are driving. Sometimes you go the wrong way without realizing it! Other times you have to go a different way because of a detour sign. Wouldn't it be nice if God showed us the right way to go after something happens to derail us? In construction zones we just follow the signs, but it takes more effort to discern which way God wants us to go. Roadwork and work zones create new sets of problems, but the end result is always an improvement from the way things were before. A firm foundation can prevent potholes, in a road and in our lives. Don't we all hate to slow down when we are almost there? But how many times have we averted disaster by heeding God's warning signs... physically and spiritually?

WEEK 8 HOMEWORK RECAP

Focal Verse: 1 Peter 5:8

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

DAY 1—FORKS IN THE ROAD (*Focal Passage: Acts 9 – Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus*) John 14:6 *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* When you are faced with a "fork in the road," pray, pray, pray. Choices--every day we are bombarded with decisions. Some of them are minor; many of them are major. Some of them are expected; many of them come during a crisis. We face many forks in our spiritual road of life. There are unending opportunities to take a wrong turn. BUT, when we follow our life road map (*God's Word*), and practice an ongoing, daily-seeking, trusting, and living relationship with Jesus, our life-choices remain God-honoring and God-glorifying.

DAY 2—DETOURS IN LIFE (*Focal Passages: Acts 15 and 16 – Paul detoured by the Holy Spirit*) Acts 16:7 *"... but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to enter."* God allows detours in our lives for a reason. Detours—Sometimes it seems everything is on track, including plans for the future then something unexpected happens. We stumble because of a *life detour*. Our

current path becomes obscure and our destination is now out of sight. We are faced with a choice to either accept the detour with grace, or react with bitterness and anger. Paul had a plan of action and a planned route. BUT, God re-routed Paul so He could use him in a mighty way to spread the Gospel. Paul obeyed God's plan for a new direction.

DAY 3—THE WORK ZONE (*Focal Passage: Acts 16 – Paul and Silas imprisoned*) Acts

16:25 “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Expect the unexpected. As believers serving the Lord, we must be prepared for the unexpected things in life. When we hit spiritual work zones, we must believe God leading us. We must handle unforeseen events in life by drawing near to God. As Christians, we must walk in victory, despite our circumstances. God uses difficult times in our lives to refine us, perfect our faith, and make us more like Jesus.

DAY 4—WATCH FOR POTHOLES (*Focal Passage: Acts 17 – Paul in Athens*)

Acts 17:16 “While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.” Build upon a firm foundation. God's timing is always perfect. He is the best encourager! He gives us everything we need to build a strong and steady foundation, one that will not crumble in times of stress or through worldly pressures. He provides us with all we need to construct a solid path, so we don't stumble into life's potholes.

DAY 5 – CAUTION SLOW TRAFFIC AHEAD! (*Focal Passage: Acts 21– Paul's ministry*)

Acts 22:18 “Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.” Focus on God and watch for His caution warnings in your life! Just like traffic signs and signals alert us and keep us from danger, we must be alert to *God's warning signs* as we go through each day. God knows what is ahead, and in His tenderness gives caution signs to forewarn us. Our role is to stay focused on God so we recognize when He is speaking to us.

TEACHING TIPS...

Frustrated! That's how most of us feel when a roadblock, detour or other traffic hazard interrupts our travel time. Yes, we realize that eventually the road will be better, making our trip smoother and faster, but in the moment we just want to get where we are going!

- Mention to the group that when you study something in God's Word, He often gives you an opportunity to practice or put it into action. His goal is for us to move head knowledge

to heart knowledge. So, did anyone experience an actual road construction scenario that served as a reminder to this week's study: detours, roadblocks, forks in the road, work zones?

- Ask the ladies about any roadblocks God placed in their lives to cause them to go a different way, or stop something altogether. Sometimes it takes hindsight to realize God was directing us to a better approach.
- *Behind the Veil* Question – We sense Ryan's frustration with the reconstruction process and the fact that Ashley has gone to visit her *other* friend. Where can he look for help?
- Listen to song #8 on *An Invitation* – **Treasured**. This song is truly a blessing straight from the Lord through my sister Cindy, to us! Absorb each word. Praise God for the roadblocks in life that don't make sense.

WEEK 9—FIT FOR JESUS: Get UP! Get Out! Get Going!

We all know that to be in the best shape for a physical competition, we have to work at it. We must commit to a regular exercise routine, work on our endurance, do some strength training, learn to play with others if we participate in a team sport, and listen to our coach or trainer. Slacking off from any one of these aspects of training will either hinder or destroy our ultimate goals.

What about life's contests? What can we do to prepare ourselves for daily spiritual battles? Shouldn't praying, reading the Bible, and worshipping God be part of our daily routines? Sooner or later we all have to dig deep to get through some serious problems, but these trials will make us stronger. Stand firm in the Lord! The body of Christ is made up of people with different personalities, but we all have our salvation in common. Learn to work together to bring glory to God, and remember to listen for His voice.

HOMEWORK RECAP

Focal Verse: 1 John 2:6 *Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*

DAY 1—TRAINING FOR THE PRIZE (*focal passage: 1 Thessalonians 1*)

1 Thessalonians 1:3 *"We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Today's study taught us how to be prepared for life's *spiritual competitions*. Just as regular workouts prepare your body for physical competitions, *spiritual workouts* keep the Christian prepared for *life's competitions*. We must continually stay in *training mode*. The Christian "trains" by praying, reading the Word, spending time with other believers, praising and worshiping Jesus, going to church, etc. If these Christian disciplines are neglected, we are not in "spiritual shape" when life throws us a curve.

DAY 2—ENDURING THE RACE (*focal passage 1 Thessalonians 2*)

1 Corinthians 9:25 *Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.* Day 2 focused on *endurance*. A marathon runner has *endurance* only after much *time* and *training* before the event. This is also true in our Christian walk. A relationship with the *Master Trainer* takes time and dedication. Staying in the Word and in prayer refines our spiritual strength. And as a result, *Reflecting Him* becomes automatic.

DAY 3—STRENGTH TRAINING (*focal passage 1 Thessalonians 3*)

1 Thessalonians 3:8 *"For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord."* On Day 3, we witnessed Paul and Timothy in ministry together. We saw how they were *strengthened* by each other as they partnered in confirming and comforting the church at Thessalonica. They *gained strength* from each other and passed that *strength* on to the church, encouraging believers to stand firm in the Lord.

DAY 4—TEAM BUILDING (*focal passage 1 Thessalonians 4*)

1 Thessalonians 4:9 *"Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other."* In today's study we focused on *team building*, holding up Paul's leadership qualities and skills to our own. We were reminded to *lead* with dedication, offering hope and encouragement to those God has placed on our *teams*. Above all, we must remember to pray and connect with *team members*, whether on a committee, at work, or in our families.

DAY 5—FINAL INSTRUCTIONS (*focal passage 1 Thessalonians 5*)

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* On Day 5 we looked at the *instruction guide* for Christian living that Paul provides in 1 Thessalonians 5. Here, we find a list on the way Jesus

desires us to live. Rejoice, pray, give thanks, do not quench the Spirit, test everything, hold fast to what is good, and abstain from every form of evil. The blessing of *God's Final Instruction Booklet*, His Word, is all we need to live a life sold out to Jesus. The final result: To become HIS reflection.

TEACHING TIPS—WEEK 9

It takes commitment to get through an exercise program, or participate in a sporting event. A good relationship with God also takes commitment.

- Ask the ladies which type of workout they prefer and why?
- Bring examples of workout equipment: 3 lb. weight, jump rope, exercise ball, etc. Make comparisons between these physical tools and the spiritual life lessons they represent. For example, using weights builds muscle tone and bone strength, just as spending time in the Word provides spiritual toning to our Christian lives and energy for a strong relationship with Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you examples to share with your group.
Remember, He is our teacher and guide throughout this study!
- Working on this ten-week Bible study puts us in the Word on a regular basis. Hopefully it has become a habit. Now that it is almost over, will the ladies replace the study with something else to keep them in God's word? Any suggestions?
- *Behind the Veil* Question – A life with Christ is a work in progress. We may be at different places in our reconstruction process, but the starting place for everyone is a firm foundation. How is Ryan laying his foundation?
- Listen to song #6 on *An Invitation* – **Kiss of God**. Soak in Him again through the words of this song!

WEEK 10—SO, REFLECT HIM: Love God, Live for Jesus, Breathe in the Holy Spirit

Thank you, Lord, for bringing this group through 10 weeks of Bible study. As we journeyed through the lessons, God was right there with us, encouraging us all the way. Are we reflecting Him more... at home, with our families, at church, at work, at the store, and during difficult times, as well as peaceful periods? That was the purpose of this book, and the *Reflecting Him*

team prays that everyone who does this study will be more aware of Jesus working in all areas of their lives.

HOMEWORK RECAP—WEEK 10

FOCAL VERSE: 2 Corinthians 3:18

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Over the past nine weeks of *Reflecting Him* we discovered:

- How the *pottery process* parallels the molding and shaping of our spiritual life.
Focal Verse: *We are the clay, you are the potter, we are all the work of your hand.* Is 64:8
- How the *five senses* of the soul connect us with the Lord, our soul Creator.
Focal Verse: *Matthew 22:37 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*
- How the *sun-earth connection* reminds us of the Son's light and Holy Spirit's power in our lives. Focal Verse: *1 Corinthians 1:18, For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
- How the *rooms of our physical homes* relate to the rooms of our spiritual homes, where the Holy Spirit dwells. Focal Verse: *Matthew 6:6, When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
- How the *gasoline supply chain* compares to our journey of faith, fueled through prayer.
Focal Verse: *Hebrews 11:1, Now, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*
- How the *gardening experience* correlates to cultivating our lives for God's glory.
Focal Verse: *Galatians 5:16, Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*
- How *roadblocks and detours* on the road relate to road blocks in life, keeping us alert and focused on Jesus. Focal Verse: *1 Peter 5:8, Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

- How the *training routine* to stay in physical shape contrasts to training to stay in spiritual shape. Focal Verse: 1 John 2:6, *Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*

WAYS TO MOVE FORWARD REFLECTING HIM DAILY

INWARDLY

- *Look* for Him throughout **your** day
- *Recognize* opportunities to see His influence in **your** life
- *Ask* the Holy Spirit to help **you** discern the work of God in everyday-type situations
- *Dive* headfirst into **your** relationship with Jesus
- *Seek* Him, so **you** may reflect Him

OUTWARDLY

- *God desires each believer to reflect Him* in **all** that they do prompting **others** to think...*I want that, too.*
- *God desires each believer to reflect Him* in **every** part of their life so **others** receive God's love through us.
- *God desires each believer to reflect Him* in **witnessing** to generations so **others** might benefit.
- *God desires each believer to reflect Him* in **relationship** not just religion helping **others** to find Him.

The more you *seek Him*... The more you will *reflect Him*... The more you will find yourself *living for Him*.

TEACHING TIPS—WEEK 10

The end of the final lesson is devoted to recapping each previous week. We would love to hear about your group study, so if you want to share, please contact us at www.reflectivelifeministries.org.

- We highly recommend that the large group have a Share Time. Not just in the small groups, but the big group as well. This connects the women in a powerful way! Remember one of our goals at the very beginning was to ask the Lord to remove the veils from our faces. Get real with one another. Sharing testimonies with a group strengthens the whole. Don't miss this opportunity of a lifetime!

- *Behind the Veil* – Don't you love happy endings? Ryan and his mom became “new” people after they moved into the old mill house... Ryan became a new believer, and his mom renewed her walk with Jesus.
- Listen to the theme song for Reflecting Him on *An Invitation – #5, Reflect Him to Me*. Encourage the women to reflect Christ wherever they are in life. Our purpose, as believers, is to be more like Jesus everyday... Reflecting Him to others through the grace and mercy of Jesus who shines His light upon us so we can reflect the light of Christ to others!

FREE DOWNLOAD...

Reflecting Him Video Teaching Series VIEWER'S GUIDE available to download FREE and use to accompany the 10-week video teaching sessions with Carla McDougal and the movie *Behind the Veil*. Go to...

http://www.reflectivelifeministries.org/12_studies.html

FROM THE AUTHOR—CARLA MCDUGAL

I love Bible study groups! I find the more I dive into the Word; the more I crave to know Jesus. I want to live and breathe Him! But why do I still fall short of my heart's desire? Sin. Yes, there is no doubt I am redeemed by the blood of Jesus. His grace and mercy abound. But I still live within the walls of my sin nature. Thankfully, I know my *position* is with Jesus forever, but I find the *condition* of my relationship with Him waivers, and that is one reason why Bible study groups are so important in my life. I personally like the accountability and encouragement to stay focused in my daily walk with the Lord that I receive from these groups.

I pray you experience the blessing of serving the Lord through facilitating your small group. Be encouraged, sister-friend. God has exciting things planned for the next ten weeks. He will lead you as you lead others! Here is a quote from *Book Reviews* by Molly Edwards. May her words encourage you as you begin this ten-week journey...

Reflecting Him is wonderful! A 10-week Bible Study to live for Him! Outstanding! Through *Reflecting Him*, the author breaks down aspects of life to compare it to spiritual truths, so that we may live for Him. An easy to comprehend Bible Study. Through the author's own life happenings and struggles, she blends them with scripture and questions, and then takes us on a wonderful journey to become a Christ-reflecting Christian, one who seeks to live for Him. I love that! My problem with many Bible studies is that I don't understand them, or they are big word talk. But, with *Reflecting Him*, Carla broke it down simply and easily, making this one that I give 2 thumbs up to, and a 4 star recommendation to all those looking for an awesome, new, up-lifting Bible study to live for Him!

Finally, I can't stress enough how important it is to be *real* as you lead your group. Women pick up on this very quickly! Remember, all it takes is one to remove her mask and others will follow. May you receive a blessing *Reflecting Him* together!

From My Heart to Yours,

Carla McDougal

Founder of and Speaker for *Reflective Life Ministries*

Author of *Reflecting Him*

www.reflectivelifeministries.org



REFLECTING HIM

LIVING FOR JESUS AND LOVING IT!

Viewer's Guide

FOR

REFLECTING HIM DVD TEACHING SERIES

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~ **BEHIND THE VEIL** ~
MOVIE RECAP
Sessions 1 and 2

CHARACTERS

Mr. James—Pastor/Father/Grandfather who we saw pass away at the beginning of the movie. He collected and loved working on his tractors. He called them “*his ladies*” and gave them all ladies’ names. He was working on his tractors when he passed away. Mr. James wrote letters. After his death, Julia found his letters, some not even addressed. Even though he knew that they would never receive his letter by mail since he didn’t even know where to send them, he felt he should put in writing exactly how he felt, knowing that someday when he was no longer on this earth, those people might read his letters to them.

Two daughters/sisters Julia—Julia is steadfast in her faith. She was never married and has no children of her own. She is a 5th grade teacher who feels that “they” are her children. Julia loves her job and believes that her 5th graders are “*pots that are being created and molded by the Lord.*” **Karen** – Karen is divorced and bitter. She has been estranged from her family for over 20 years.

Ryan—Ryan is Karen’s son. He and his Mom do not have a good relationship. Ryan had no idea his grandfather (*Mr. James*) even existed. Ryan is told how much he resembles Mr. James.

Behind the Veil Both Karen and Ryan wear veils --- Karen’s veil is “confidence,” which actually manifests itself through insecurity. Ryan’s veil is a veil of apathy. He acts like he doesn’t care, but down deep, he really does.

Janet –Janet is a friend and close neighbor. She is the mother of Ashley. She enters the story by bringing food to Janet’s house, after the death of Mr. James.

Ashley—Ashley is Janet’s daughter. She is the one who found Mr. James when he passed away. She was very close to him and would work on tractors with him.

At the end of Session 2 of the movie, Julia states that when someone passes away suddenly, it makes us all think more about everyday things and every relationship in our lives. She points out that we need to tell people how we feel about them before it is too late.

WEEK 1
REFLECTING HIM DVD LISTENING GUIDE
SESSION 1—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
REFLECTIONS IN LIFE: Images in the Mirror

INTRODUCTION

REFLECTING HIM FOCAL VERSE: 2 Corinthians 3:18

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Do you see Jesus in Your daily life or save Him for emergencies?

God longs for you to spend your day with Him. *Reflecting Him* helps you pull back the veil so you can see how a true relationship with the Lord changes your life. As Jesus becomes a part of everything you do, you will soon be reflecting Him to those around you.

In ten weeks, through *Reflecting Him* you will:

- Realize life is not about you, but all about Him
- See daily applications for lessons learned from Scripture
- Understand how God is directing your life—often without you knowing it
- Learn the importance of prayer in your everyday activities
- Discover the joyful intimacy of a life filled with Jesus
- Recognize how your personal relationship with Jesus changes when you make Him part of everything
- Begin to reflect Him in your relationships with each other
- Receive practical reminders to help you walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh
- Learn to recognize those day to day moments God uses to illuminate His teachings
- Recognize God's hand on your daily life
- Form a deeper, more intimate walk with Jesus

Each week focuses on a different aspect of life, comparing it to a spiritual truth.

We will look at:

- How the *pottery process* parallels the molding and shaping of our spiritual life
- How the *five senses* of the soul connect us with the Lord, our soul Creator
- How the *sun-earth connection* reminds us of the Son's light and Holy Spirit's power in our lives
- How the *rooms of our physical homes* relate to the rooms of our spiritual homes
- How the *gasoline supply chain* compares to our journey of faith, fueled through prayer
- How the *gardening experience* correlates to cultivating our lives for God's glory
- How the *road blocks and detours* relate to road blocks in life, keeping us alert and focused on Jesus
- How the *training routine* to stay in physical shape contrasts to training to stay in spiritual shape

We need to keep our eyes on Jesus so we might become a reflection of Him.

SESSION 1—DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Cor. 3:18

FOCAL VERSES: 2 Corinthians 3:7-8; 13-18; Matthew 27:51; Exodus 34:29-35

When you think of the word *reflection*, what do you think of? What does *reflecting* the Lord look like?

Scripture gives us a glimpse of a literal *reflection of the Lord* through the experience of Moses...

2 Corinthians 3:7-8; 13-18

- Christ is the New Covenant.
- Jesus is the only who has the ability to remove the veil of our hearts.
- Then, the Lord gives us the Holy Spirit to be our counselor and guide, connecting us with Christ and the Lord God Himself.

Matthew 27:51

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

- When Christ died, the veil between the Holy of Holies and the most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom.
- Jesus tore the veil and now we have access to God through a personal relationship with Jesus.
- The closer we get to the Lord, the more our veils come off.

MOSES' FACE RADIATES Exodus 34:29-35

- Our faces become more radiant as we spend time with the Lord.
- Sometimes we aren't aware we look different to the world after spending time with the Lord.
- Our radiance reflects off of us and onto others as we go through our day.
- Our radiance is NOT about us but about Him and what he wants to do in our lives
- He chooses to use us to reflect Him to others

THE DIAMOND PROCESS

A diamond begins as a piece of graphite deep in the earth. Through time, sheets of substance, naturally lubricated, move together like sheets of paper. Then, when conditions are just right and the heat and the pressure of the earth are abundant, a transformation takes place. The result is a diamond.

- A diamond does not have ability to absorb light---it can only reflect light
- When a diamond is veiled, it cannot reflect---the reflection is masked or blocked
- When a diamond is unveiled, it reflects the light with brilliance and colors of the rainbow]\

Just like us...

- The Lord want us to absorb His light
- The Lord needs us to reflect His light
- The Lord helps us to raise, lift, and remove the veils in our lives
- The Lord expects us to reflect Him so others might be drawn to Him

WEEK 2
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 2 – DVD LISTENING GUIDE
CREATED FOR GOD, BY GOD: Like Clay in the Hands of the Potter

TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES

Isaiah 64:8; Romans 9:19-21; Luke 6:45; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; Acts 9:5

Have you ever watched a potter creating something out of clay? First, he takes the clay and kneads it into the right consistency, working it to get rid of the imperfections. He then puts it on his wheel, where pressure from his hands molds the vessel into the shape he wants. Each piece is completely different from any other.

The final step is putting the pottery into the kiln where heat solidifies it, and turns it into a useful product. In this week's lesson leads us to think about the different processes God uses on us, to get the end results He wants. We certainly feel the pressure as He molds us and tries to get rid of our imperfections. We are individuals different from each other, but created by the same God. And, we all know what it means to have the heat turned up at times. God creates situations to get our attention and to help us reach our full potential. We compare the touch of the potter, the lump of clay, the spinning of the wheel, the imperfections of the clay, and the firing process, with God's creation of man. We also look at several characters in the Bible to see how God formed and used them for His glory.

In ancient times, when the people were nomadic, there was no pottery—no vessels. The people simply followed the streams and made their camps by the water. Then, when pottery was created, they were able to move around and carry water to their homes. Since this was a very important element that was added to the homes, the potter became a vital part of their lives. Often, they would watch the potter as he created the pots.

TYPES OF VESSELS (In Biblical times—This is one possibility)

VESSEL OF HONOR (*2 Tim 2:20-21*)—Fresh water was collected every day and brought back to the people's homes. In their homes, there was a bench with holes. The first hole contained a *vessel of honor for fresh water*. When family came in, they would grab the ladle and get a fresh drink. _____

VESSEL OF DISHONOR—This vessel was imperfect. It may have had chips or other imperfections and was only used for stagnant water from the day before. It carried leftovers from the vessel of honor. _____

CHOSEN VESSEL (*Acts 9:15*)—The chosen vessel was usually placed in a dark, shut off closet or place and was to be used only at a purposeful time...a time that only the potter knew was right for the "*chosen vessel*." When someone approached the potter's table, they would ask for a "*chosen vessel*" from the potter---the potter picked it out, not the person requesting the vessel.

Are you in the closet and wondering, “Where is God going to use me?” Maybe you are in the dark for a while. Remember, God’s timing is perfect. He will take you out and use you as a **chosen vessel** when the time is perfect. Wait on God’s timing.

CLEAN VESSEL—A clean vessel is one that had previously been a vessel of honor. However, due to usage, it might have become chipped or marred somehow or had “scum” around the edge, and was therefore no longer a vessel of honor. Once or twice a year, the owner would take their chipped or marred vessels back to the potter to be *restored*. The potter would scrape out the inside of the vessel, cleansing and restoring it. He would remold it, fix what needed to be mended, and then re-fire it, making it a vessel of honor again.

BROKEN VESSEL—A broken vessel was one that went into the furnace without the impurities being pressed out during the treading process, so they broke easily. Since they were not a “throwaway society,” the potter would go and find a particular kind of bug and would take the blood from that bug, combine it with the powder that was left from the broken pieces, producing cement. He would then mend the pieces back together with this cement and fire the piece again until it took hold. Once it took hold, it was then referred to as a Vessel of Mercy.

VESSEL OF MERCY—A vessel of mercy was used for carrying water to strangers that would enter the town. They would receive fresh water from the vessels of mercy. **WE** are *living vessels of mercy*, taking the living water of Jesus to “*strangers*” that the Lord places in our lives.

VESSEL OF WRATH—A vessel of wrath didn’t hold up in the fire. However, it was never thrown away, but used perhaps as a tombstone with a name written on it. Although a vessel of wrath was not specifically used for what the potter had in mind for it, it was still used.

WEEK 3
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 3—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
SENSES OF THE SOUL: The Sight, Touch, Taste, Aroma, and Sound of Jesus

God created us specifically for Him and, through Senses of the Soul this week we looked at the human sensory system---the touch, the aroma, the taste, the hearing and the various phases that our minds and bodies move through as we view things. We saw how the eyes view things upside down, but the brain takes that image and turns it right side up, just as Jesus enables us to view life events right side up when we view everything through a relationship with Him and a study of His word.

WEEK 3: DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES Rom 12:4-11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Mark 1:40-42

THE BODY OF CHRIST Romans 12:4-11; 1 Cor 12:12-27

This human body that God created only works how God intended when all parts function together. It does not, and cannot function independently. Each part requires the cooperation and proper workings of the other parts. The body tells the mind what it needs or wants to do and then our bodies and brains act and react in unison to accomplish the task.

LOVE NEVER FAILS 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

It's interesting, both Rom 12:4-11 and Cor 12:12-27 lead into the subject of "love one another." This is not by accident. _____

THE TOUCH OF JESUS CHRIST Mark 1:40-42

The man knew the importance of *touch*. When someone had leprosy they were outcast to society; forced to live in leper camps outside the city. Perhaps the disciples even scampered backward, while watching Jesus reach out and touch this man, witnessing the healing touch of their "*teacher*." _____

This is a great example of the magnitude of what Jesus Christ does for us when He *touches* our lives. He changes us. We are not the same as before. He touches our hearts, which changes what comes out of our mouths, which changes how people view us, which, ultimately changes how they view **Him**.

WEEK 4
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 4—DVD LISTENING GUIDE

THE POWER SOURCE: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES: 1 Corinthians 1:18; Isaiah 45:5-12; Genesis 1:1-5; 14-19; Rev 21:22-24
Luke 23:44-46

THE POWER SOURCE—Light and Darkness

How would you define light? How would you define darkness? Is there any place on this earth where light is not revealed? Even in Alaska, in the dead of winter, there is still light that will appear for a few hours.

God tells us in Genesis that “*in the beginning*” the earth was formless and empty. The Hebrew word for *formless* means “desolate and in a state of confusion; chaotic.” Since God didn’t create the sun or the moon until the fourth day of creation, what was the “*light*” that God spoke of in Genesis 1:3? For the answer, go to Revelation 21:22-24.

THE POWER SOURCE—The Glory of God and the Lamb

In Revelation 21 John speaks of the New Jerusalem, there will not be any need for the sun...the physical sun...because the Glory of God will be that light that shines and Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God will be its lamp. Perhaps God’s Glory was shining on day one of creation. His radiance was the light shining in the dark and formless void before the sun was created.

This is a great reminder of our example in Week One when we looked at Moses and how the brilliance of God’s glory was radiant upon his face. That is what happens when **we** are in the presence of God. The radiance of God’s glory on **our** faces bounces back onto others as we reflect Him. He chooses to use us, His vessels, to show His light to the world. _____

THE POWER SOURCE – The Two Great Lights (*sun and moon*)

Comparison Between Two Great Lights—*the Sun to the Son—the Moon to Believers*

The SUN to the SON—Luke 23:44-46

- The sun stopped shining physically—The sun didn’t just stop shining physically that day as told in Luke, it also stopped shining spiritually when Jesus died on the cross. There occurred a darkening of the *sun* and a separation and darkening with the *Son* of God because he was separated physically from His Father at that moment. Three days later, when Jesus arose, He took His place as the shining light of God who sits at the right hand of His Father.

- The sun brings order to the earth—The sun allows for the life cycles to all occur. It also affects the food chain. Without the physical sun, physical order of the earth becomes chaotic. Jesus, the Son, brings order to our souls. *Without Him* we are in chaos. *With Him*, comes order and purpose in our lives.
- The sun brings physical growth to plants—The sun brings physical growth to plants on earth. Jesus brings spiritual growth to our lives. Through our relationship and a study of God’s word, we grow stronger.
- The sun serves as a sign to mark the seasons and days and years---The sun was created by God to mark seasons, days and years. (*Luke 11:30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of God be for this generation.*) God sent His Son as a sign to mark that the Promised One had come and that God’s promises had been fulfilled.

THE MOON AND BELIEVERS (The Church)

- The moon has no light of its own. It must depend on the reflecting of the sun and being in the right spot.
- Believers have no light of their own. We must be filled with the light of Christ and then He asks that we take that light into the world.
- The moon has no life of its own.
- Believers have no life of their own. Our lives come from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The moon can be full.
- Believers can be full. As Christians, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We shine our brightest when we are “filled.”
- The moon is responsible for the waves and the tides of the oceans. It draws the water up, causing waves and tides.
- Believers can also cause some waves in the world. If we walk into a place of darkness, a wave and a drawing occurs.

THE SOLAR ECLIPSE AND LUNCAR ECLIPSE

Sun = Son of God—Jesus
Moon = Believers
Earth = The World

WEEK 5
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 5—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
PRAYER FROM THE INSIDE OUT: The Holy Spirit Initiates Prayer

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES

Revelation 3:20; Romans 8:31-39; Luke 6:46-49; Proverbs 25:28; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

PRAYER FROM THE INSIDE OUT

All of us are in need of remodeling. However, there is only one Carpenter qualified and equipped to remodel *our home*, our hearts, souls, and minds...Jesus Christ. This week, our homework took us through different parts of our homes. There are four additional areas in our homes that we are going to take a look at...

THE FRONT DOOR—Our Hearts—Revelation 3:20; Romans 8:31-39 _____

THE FOUNDATION—GOD’S WORD—Luke 6:46-49 _____

THE WALLS—SELF-CONTROL—Proverbs 25:28 *Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.*

Back in Biblical times, walls surrounded the cities. These walls were for protection against, and to hold back the enemy. For example, in Ninevah the wall around the city was three chariots wide—in Babylon the walls were six chariots wide. If there was one crack in the wall of the city, the enemy would head toward that spot and begin to break down that wall of protection, allowing them access into the city. Many of the “walls or protection” in our lives are built upon exercising self-control. If we have one crack or weakness, the enemy will aim at that weakness and attempt to break us down and distract us from the things of God. Our faith may become weakened and our confidence may start to crumble. We must go to the Lord and ask Him to build up our self-control and discernment through the work of the Holy Spirit.

THE ATTIC—OUR MINDS—2 Corinthians 10:3-5

As Scripture teaches in 2 Corinthians, we should take **every thought** captive, making it obedient to Christ. Satan shoots fiery darts, targeting our minds. If he can get us to think on things, then perhaps he can also get us to act on those things. Distraction is Satan’s weapon of choice. He can draw our thoughts back to our past---past hurts, past failures, past sins. When these thoughts go unchecked and unfiltered through a firm foundation built upon our relationship with the Lord, we can become oppressed and strongholds can be formed. If we keep every thought captive to Christ, we keep the enemy at bay. Our walls are strong; our foundation is sound, and Satan never gets a foothold in our minds. _____

What happens when Unhealthy Thoughts aren’t taken Captive? Watch the progression...

Action > Appetite > Weakness > Habit > Oppression from the Enemy >
~ A Stronghold ~

STOP the cycle before it even gets started—Captive your thoughts!

WEEK 6
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 6—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
PRAYER FUELS FAITH: Prayer Energizes Faith Into Action

Very Important: Skip the Intro in Week 6 due to a technical sound issue!

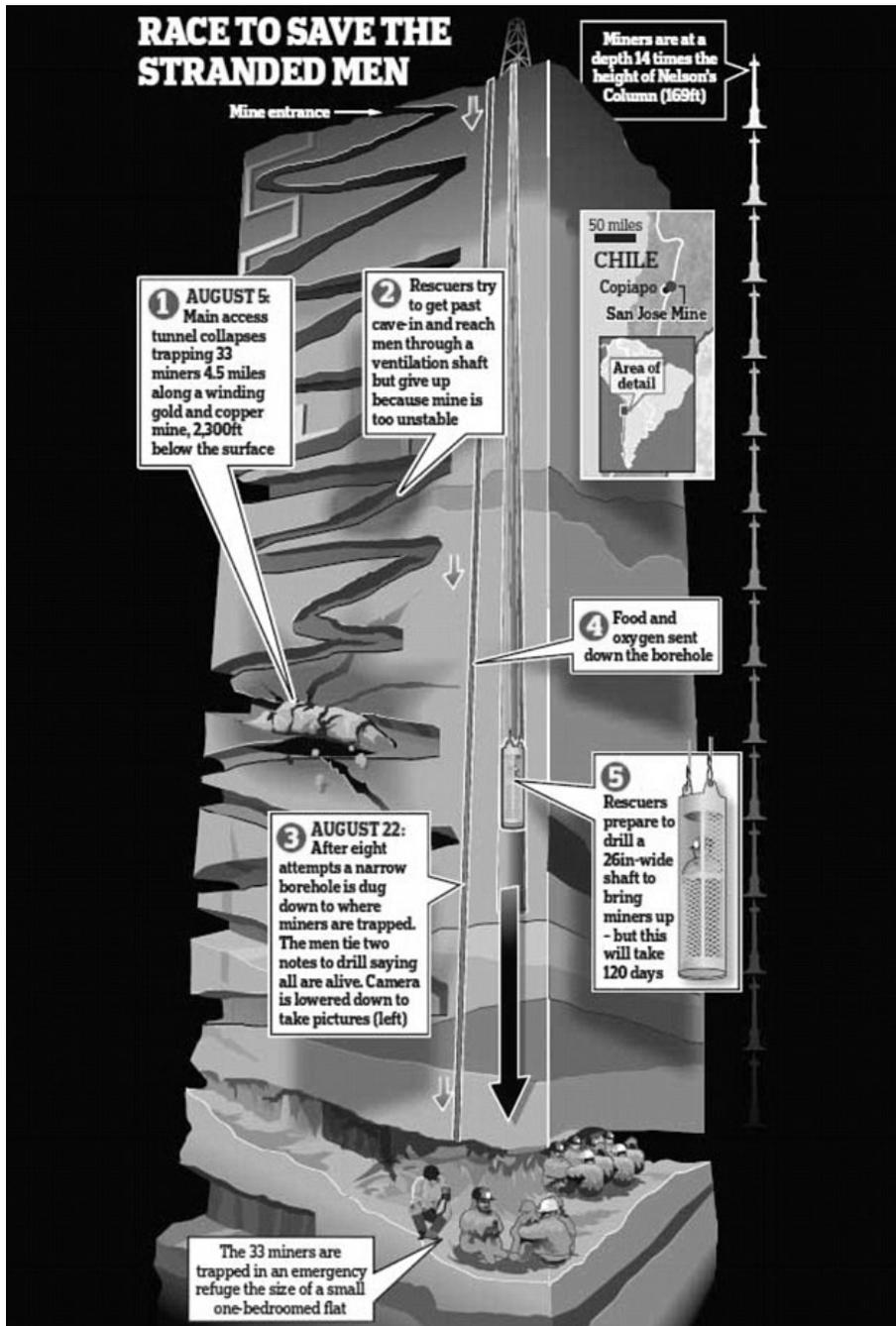
DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES Hebrews 11:1; Ephesians 1:18-20; Ephesians 3:14-21

A Lesson from History: *October 23, 2010 – Chilean Miners Rescued*

- August 5, 2010—Chilean miners trapped 2000 feet underground.
- Sixty-nine days of darkness, excessive heat and humidity.
- First 17 days, family members have no idea if their loved ones are dead or alive.
- Prayer vigils break out – family members pray for a miracle.
- Rescuers meet to figure out how to drill down and communicate with the miners.
- A borehole the width of a grapefruit is drilled.
- Rescuers receive a note from the miners through that borehole saying, “*We are alive.*”
- Rescuers send Bibles, water, food, and letters from loved ones down to the miners.
- Family members send shirts down to the men with “*God is in control*” on them.
- Rescuers build a capsule to rescue the miners, naming the capsule “*the Phoenix.*”
- Upon rescue, one of the miners immediately drops to his knees to pray saying, “*I never lost faith.*”
- Family members call their loved ones rescue a “*miracle from God.*”

The story of the Chilean miners parallels what we studied this week as we were “diggin’ in” and seeing how prayer fuels faith. Look at the image on the next page to see the connection...



DAY 1—TRUSTING THE UNSEEN

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

- The rescue workers and family members had to **trust the unseen** in their hopes that the miners were alive.
- For 17 days, they couldn't see—those who exercised their faith had to trust God and know that He was in control.
- Intercessory prayers began immediately as people around the world prayed for the miners' rescue.
- The miners prayed at noon and at six every day.
- Just like the diamond process we studied, where the heat and the pressure in the depths of the earth produces graphite that is transformed into diamonds, those miners were transformed in the heat and depth of that black hole where they lived for over two months. They emerged with transformed faith!

DAY 2--PREPARING THE HEART

- The rescue workers had to *prepare*, collect, think through the process, and work together in *unity*.
- Bible study *prepares* us for what God has in store for us. He knows what our day will hold and, when we read His Word on a DAILY basis, He prepares our hearts for what is to come.
- God wants us to do the same in His church—we need to work and serve with **unity**.

DAY 3—DIGGIN' IN

We "*dig in*" by praying. We learn and grow in the Lord when we take time to pray.

- Prayer sets God into motion and draws us into a more intimate relationship with Him.
- God doesn't need us to pray...He wants us to pray and have that fellowship with Him.
 - Prayer **is not** just empty words between the "Dear God" and "Amen."
 - Prayer **is not** begging and pleading with God, asking Him to do what we want Him to do.
 - Prayer **is not** manipulating God or twisting His arm.
 - Prayer **is not** trying to change God's mind.
 - Prayer **is** allowing God to change us.
 - Prayer **is** Jesus being glorified.
 - Prayer **is** acknowledging that we are totally dependent on God.
 - Prayer **is** opening our lives and hearts *to God*.

Ephesians 1:18-20; 3:14-21

- There is power in prayer
- Not for us, but for God's will to be set into motion
- Throughout all generations --- that is inclusive of us!
- Utilize it – spend moments with Him
- Come to know Him intimately

DAY 4—MOVE INTO ACTION

Personal Prayer

- Moves God into action for you
 - Brings inward growth for you
 - Builds your relationship with God
-
-
-

Intercessory Prayer

- Moves God into action for others
 - Brings inward growth for others
 - Builds relationships with God for others
-
-
-

Prayer is a huge responsibility! It could be that God’s answer to **our prayers** is the reason that our children and others learn how to pray and are able to witness God’s power and glory.

DAY 5—THE OUTCOME

Just as a *magnifying glass* placed in the sun ignites into flame that which it is focused upon, *our prayers* for others ignite into flame God’s power and might, leaving behind a *testimony of faith, fueled by prayer*.

The miners made it out safely on October 23, 2010---

- They prayed...
- They trusted God with their lives...
- They gave God the glory...
- They left behind a testimony...

May *we* do the same!

WEEK 7
SESSION 7—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
THE CONTROL SYNDROME: Consequences of Running Ahead

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES Judges 6:7-18; 6:27; 6:33-37; Judges 7:2-6; 7:22

Defining the ministry to which God has called you _____

Do you understand your position, purpose, potential in ministry? _____

Just as gardens left untended fail to grow to their full potential, so is true in ministry. If our God-given area(s) of ministry are not cultivated they will fail and grow stagnant. In both cases, work, time, and effort on our part are necessary to experience all the FRUIT that God has for us.

Wherever and whenever God calls you to serve, HE will guide you, equip you, and bring you success---all for His glory.

GIDEON'S CALL—Judges 6:7-18

- Israelites have been oppressed for 7 years and begin crying out to God
- God chooses Gideon to lead the Israelites out of captivity.
- Gideon resists his calling, arguing with the angel and reminding him of his weaknesses.
- Angel tells Gideon not to fear, he is chosen, and the Lord will be with him.
- Gideon brings an offering to the Lord.

GIDEON'S OBEDIENCE—Judges 6:6:27

- Gideon obeys God's command to tear down the altar of Baal.
- Gideon's action inflames the enemy.

GOD'S VALIDATION—Judges 6:33-37

GOD'S SIFTING— Judges 7:2-6

- God tells Gideon there are too many men in his army.
- God sifts out the men from 22,000 to 300, so HE will receive the glory for victory.

God WILL do the unbelievable in our areas of ministry to which He called us, IF we keep the focus OFF of ourselves and ON Him.

GIDEON'S FOCUS: GOD'S GLORY—Judges 7:22

Judges 6:16, *The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.* Gideon keeps his focus on God. Gideon continues praying and asking God for direction. God receives the glory for the battle and the victory.

- Gideon stayed focused on God...
 - Gideon was obedient to God...
 - Gideon never got ahead of God...

GOD RECEIVED THE GLORY FOR GIDEON'S CALLING AND VICTORY!

WEEK 8
SESSION 8—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
ROADBLOCKS AHEAD: Caution—Diversions Along the Way

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES Psalm 18:1-3; Psalm 28:1; Psalm 28:6-9; Deuteronomy 6:5-9

This week, we discussed roadblocks—comparing the **physical roadblocks** and **detours** we come across to the **spiritual roadblocks** and **detours** that occur in our lives. We must stay **alert** and **watchful** in both cases. Often, when we experience detours or road blocks in life, we ask God why? He does not always answer our questions, but asks that we simply trust Him.

The reasons for roadblocks in our lives vary Psalm 18:1-3; 28:1,6-9

- Sometimes the Lord allows roadblocks because He has a different route for us.
- Some of our diversions are self-induced because of choices we make.
- Sometimes Satan is working to halt God’s plans and purposes for His children.

Scripture reminds us that God is...

- Our STRENGTH
- Our PROTECTOR
- Our REFUGE
- Our SALVATION

Scripture reminds us that God will...

HEAR us, SAVE us, SHIELD us, and CARRY us

Scripture reminds us that WE should...

- LOVE Him
- HONOR Him
- REMEMBER Him

Wrecks in life...

- Family *wrecks*, such as divorce
- Financial *wrecks*, such as losing a home
- Medical *wrecks*, such as an illness or death of a loved one
- Literal *wrecks*, such as an accident

Life is interrupted, scary, and uncertain. Our reaction should be to...

- *Focus* on God immediately
- *Listen* to God when He calls us to pray
- *Act* when God calls us to stand in the gap
- *Encourage* one another

WEEK 9
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 9—DVD LISTENING GUIDE
FIT FOR JESUS: Get Up! Get Out! Get Going!

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

FOCAL VERSES Philippians 3:12-17, 2 Timothy 1:3-10, 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 72 Timothy 4:6-8

Philippians 3:12-17 WE MUST...

- Reach for perfection through God's grace
- Exercise constant repentance and thankfulness to God
- Grow even more fit for heaven each day
- Move toward the mutual goal of spreading the gospel
- Go forward, no matter what your age or stage of life

2 Timothy 1:3-10 WE MUST...

- Stir up the gifts of God
- Exercise a daily prayer life
- Tread in the steps of godly ancestors
- Pass the baton to a successor when prompted

2 Timothy 2:1-2 WE MUST...

- Strive in constancy and perseverance
- Rouse others to serve
- Strengthen as we grow in service
- Train up others to succeed us in ministry

2 Timothy 2: 7 WE MUST...

- Imitate the things others have taught us
- Practice the things others have taught us
- Focus on the things God has taught us

2 Timothy 4:6-8 WE MUST...

- Be industrious in our work for the lord
- Be prepared for trials
- Be willing to be poured out as a drink offering
- Fight the good fight
- Finish the race with joy
- Prepare for His appearing

WEEK 10
REFLECTING HIM
SESSION 10—DVD LISTENING GUIDE

SO... REFLECT HIM: Love God, Live for Jesus, Breathe in the Holy Spirit!

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

Focal Verse: 2 Corinthians 3:18

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

WITH UNVEILED FACES

Moving through doubt and fear in our lives is difficult. Through Carla's testimony, we learn how to lift and remove our veils, allowing Jesus to work in and through us to further His Kingdom.

Our **veils or masks** can be fashioned slowly, over time, virtually without detection. Often, we are stopped in our ministry tracks by a lack of confidence.

- *First*, a seed of doubt is planted
- *Then*, that seed of doubt takes root
- *Next*, the seed of doubt embeds itself in our hearts
- *Finally*, the seed of doubt grows deeper and our minds become entangled

These **doubts** can grow into confusion and a lack of direction. Just like the diamond process we studied in Week One, we can become shrouded and unable to reflect God's love.

We Must:

- *Cry out to God* asking Him to help us be released from all doubts and fears
- *Cry out to God* asking Him to remove the enemy's hand over our lives
- *Cry out to God* asking Him to give us a sense of direction and infusion of confidence
- *Cry out to God* asking Him to enable us to share our testimony with others

Cry out to God...

Then, arm-in-arm, like a band of sisters,
Move forward together
To be the light of the world,
Reflecting God's love and glory!

We need to keep our eyes on Jesus so we might become a reflection of Him.

DVD TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2 Cor. 3:18

FOCAL VERSES: 2 Corinthians 3:7-8; 13-18; Matthew 27:51; Exodus 34:29-35

When you think of the word *reflection*, what do you think of? What does *reflecting* the Lord look like?

Scripture gives us a glimpse of a literal *reflection of the Lord* through the experience of Moses...
2 Corinthians 3:7-8; 13-18

- Christ is the New Covenant
- When we come to know Him personally, the veil of our heart is removed
- Only in Christ is that veil removed
- Once the veil is removed, it cannot be replaced
- Then, the Lord gives us the Holy Spirit to be our counselor and guide, connecting us with Christ and the Lord God Himself

Matthew 27:51

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

- When Christ died, the veil between the Holy of Holies and the most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom
- Jesus tore the veil and now we have access to God through a personal relationship with Jesus
- The closer we get to the Lord, the more our veils come off

Exodus 34:29-35

- Our faces become more radiant as we spend time with the Lord
- Sometimes we are not even aware that we look different to the world after spending time with the Lord
- Our radiance reflects off of us and onto others as we go through our day
- Our radiance is NOT about us but about Him and what he wants to do in our lives
- He chooses to use us to reflect Him to others

