

# Bible Study/Small Group Discussions

## *Shortcut to Heaven*

### *Chapter 1 Three Taps*

- Suffering...1 Peter 3:17-18
  - “It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.”

### **Question #1**

*Think about the most challenging situation you have ever faced in your life and, in retrospect, identify the 3 things you did in order to move on.*

1.

2.

3.

### **Question #2**

*If faced with a similar situation today, would you approach it differently? If so, how would it be different?*

1.

### **Question #3**

*When confronted with a major obstacle in our lives, how do we as Christians truly trust God? How do we avoid bitterness in light of the circumstances we are under?*

How do we trust God?

1.

How do we avoid bitterness?

2.

***Key Takeaways from Chapter 1:***

- *Trust God, in good times and bad, for He sees the big picture. Someday, it will all make sense to us as well.*
- *Seize the day...we simply cannot wait for tomorrow to do the things we need to do today. Complacency will paralyze us.*
- *God knows our limitations. God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). His suffering on the cross was the ultimate form of love...and we must never forget.*

***Chapter 2 His Father's Eyes***

- Humility...Matthew 23:12
  - “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Question #1**

*Jesus came to the world as one of us, rather than as a king. Provide one example of Scripture that clearly illustrates this ultimate form of humility. How can we learn from this example regarding the approach to our daily walk?*

Example of Scripture:

1.

How can we learn from this example?

2.

**Question #2**

*Humility has been lost in the world today, as our lives are typically focused on impressing others and accumulating as much “stuff” as we can garner. In this story, identify three examples of Jesus putting others in front of him.*

1.

2.

3.

**Question #3**

*Think about the one person you know in this world who reflects true humility in all he/she does and share with the group an example of what makes this person so special. Give an example of what you can do in your daily walk that continually gives the glory to God...rather than yourself.*

Person you know who reflects humility and example of what makes him/her so special:

1.

Example of what you can do to give the glory to God:

2.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 2:***

- *God sees everything we do; nothing we do goes unnoticed by Him, which is why we should do these things in the first place. Simply put, we live for Him.*
- *How can we teach our children the importance of humility, while building confidence and positive self-esteem at the same time?*
- *There is a significant difference between being confident and being cocky. What can we do to exemplify this difference in our daily lives and how can we teach our children to do the same?*

### ***Chapter 3     The Last One Chosen***

- Seeds of Strength...Revelation 21:7
  - “He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

### **Question #1**

*Nick Watson was able to overcome his life as an orphan boy in Russia to bless others with the gifts he had been given. How have you blessed others today with your gifts? Give 2 examples of what you have done over the past month and 1 example of what you will do over the next month.*

What you have done (2 examples):

1.

2.

What you will do (1 example):

3.

## **Question #2**

*Augie was the one who truly saved Nicolai from his imminent death at Stonebridge Retreat for Boys because he was willing to get involved and make a difference. Who in your life has had the greatest impact on where you are today? Can you do the same for someone else in the next 30 days? If so, identify the person and your tactical plan to reach out and do it now.*

Who has had the greatest impact on you?

1.

Who can you help in the next 30 days and what is your plan?

Person Identified:

2.

Specific Plan You Are Going to Put in Place (3 things you will employ):

a.

b.

c.

## **Question #3**

*John and Sarah had prayed about adopting a child for years. In God's time, they were blessed with Nicolai. Identify a time in your life when you wanted God to answer your prayer immediately; however, He delivered the answer to your prayer in His time frame, not yours. What was your most important takeaway from this situation?*

Situation in your life when you had to wait for God's time:

1.

What was your key takeaway from this experience?

2.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 3:***

- *Kids need us today. Something as simple as a hug or a few words of heartfelt encouragement may be the difference maker in the life of a child.*
- *God has always been there for each of us, as He continually puts His arms around us and tells us He loves us. We need to do the same for others as well. In many cases, encouragement may be the perfect medicine to pick a person up and give him/her the strength to go on.*
- *The development of a child will have significant ramifications on the world for many years. By building strong seeds of strength, we will have an impact on future generations to come as well. We must teach our kids to love God with all their heart and soul today...and we must do so through our actions, not just our words.*

### ***Chapter 4 Back of Mind***

- Forgiveness...1 John 1:9-10
  - “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”

#### **Question #1**

Charles Frye felt compelled to revisit his incident from 30 years ago because he was carrying around this guilt, and as a result, he was unable to attain true peace in his life. The only way he was able to move on was to address this incident and ask for forgiveness. Have you been able to attain true peace in your life, despite past transgressions? If so, how have you been able to accomplish this?

1.

#### **Question # 2**

Satan wants us to always look back, as he knows this will paralyze our ability to move forward regarding our daily walk. Share with the group a time in your life when you asked God for forgiveness, and He truly delivered this peace. How did this allow you to move forward in your daily walk?

Example of God's forgiveness:

1.

Example of moving forward:

2.

### **Question #3**

Raymond Avila was a bad influence on Charlie as a kid, and as a result, Charlie found himself tempted to go through with their plan. The outcome was devastating. Is there a person right now in your life who is a bad influence, and as a result, you find yourself taking actions that are not truly focused on God?

- Example...
  - Boss at work asking you to compromise your personal integrity for results
  - Male or female co-worker who is encouraging you to step away from your family (it may just be a cup of coffee today, but this will change)
  - Friend who encourages you to do the little things that derail your walk:
    - Tailgating at your sporting event of choice
    - "Girls Night Out" after work
    - Drinking with the guys when you are out of town at company events

Person Identified:

1.

What do you plan to do about it...and when?

2.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 4:***

- *Once we are able to ask God for His forgiveness, we need to move on with our lives and further His kingdom.*
- *We must be able to identify those temptations in life and, as a result, stay away! Think about the first thing a child does before they jump in the water...they typically tap their toes in the water before they jump in. The best thing for us to remember is to not even tap our toes in the water. Temptations need to be identified...and avoided at all cost.*
- *Forgiveness is the first step regarding the path to recovery. Without it, we can never move forward. God is all about forgiving, but we need to ask Him for His forgiveness first. He is a loving God...and a forgiving God as well. He will always be there for us, and He will never let us down.*

### ***Chapter 5 Eyes of Blue***

- Grace...Psalm 145:8
  - “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”

### **Question #1**

Benjamin identifies his grandmother, Grace, as a person of knowledge and wisdom...someone who can teach him about life and what to expect as he grows older. Identify the one person in your life who has had the greatest impact on your personal journey. What has this person done for you, and how has it impacted what you do on a daily basis?

One person who has had the most impact on your personal journey:

1.

What has this person done and how has it impacted you?

2.

## **Question #2**

As Benjamin begins to go down a path that brings pain to his grandmother, he realizes that this pain is far greater than what he initially anticipated. Grace realizes that this event, from many years ago, needs to be revisited in order for her to truly move on and bury her pain. Is there an event in your life that needs to be revisited as well? If so, do you believe that revisiting this will truly allow you to move on?

Event in your life:

1.

Will revisiting this event allow you to move on, and if so, how?

2.

## **Question #3**

When Benjamin uncovers Grace's best and worst day as being one in the same, he asks if he can meet Grace's Father as well. Grace takes full advantage of introducing Benjamin to Jesus right then and there! Is there someone in your life who is ready to accept Jesus? If so, who is this person and what is your plan to make sure it happens?

Do you know a person who is ready to accept Jesus right now?

1.

What is your plan to make sure this happens...and when?

2.

## ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 5:***

- *God gives grace to the humble but opposes the proud.*

- *We need to partner with God regarding everything we do. Remember...He will never let us down. As difficult as it may be at times, we need to relinquish our control and truly trust Him with everything.*
- *Accepting Jesus as our Savior typically takes place on the day we realize that we cannot handle our personal trials and tribulations alone. Although the actual day we are saved may reflect a painful day in our lives, we realize later in life that it was undoubtedly our best day ever! Just like Grace uncovered in her spiritual assessment, her best day ever truly was when she found her real Father.*

## **Chapter 6 Best Friends Forever**

- Courage...Deuteronomy 31:6
  - “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

### **Question #1**

Brandon was forced to stand up to Tyler and the rest of his gang, as their treatment of him had gotten out of control. Jack was, without a doubt, the impetus behind Brandon’s newfound courage. Have you ever had a situation in your life when you had to stand up for someone who was in dire need of your assistance? What did you learn from this experience? This does not need to be a physical response on your part...support you provided could have been emotional, spiritual, or simply verbal in content.

Situation when you stood up for someone who needed your help:

1.

What did you learn from this?

2.

### **Question #2**

Fearing man is something we all do at some point in our lives. Have you ever been fearful of a particular person in your life, and as you got closer to God, did you feel this

fear subside and eventually go away? Give an example of what you did to overcome the fear you felt and how you use this now when similar situations arise.

Have you ever been fearful of a particular person in your life, and did this fear diminish as you got closer to God?

1.

How has this experience helped you overcome similar situations that have come your way ever since?

2.

### **Question #3**

Explain what it means to fear God, and not man. Fearing man will paralyze our actions; however, fearing the Lord will provide us with the necessary wisdom and confidence to move forward. Share with the group the last time you overcame a previous fear in your life by focusing on God and trusting Him with your actions.

What does it mean to fear God, not man?

1.

When did you overcome a specific fear by focusing on God?

2.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 6:***

- *The closer we get to God, the more at peace we become. By focusing on Scripture each and every day, our spiritual walk will be heightened and our dependence on Him will be strengthened.*

- *Fear of man paralyzes us because it focuses on the negative. Fear of God allows us to move forward because it focuses on the positive. The obstacles in our spiritual walk become temporary...because we know that He is in control.*
- *The beginning of wisdom starts with fearing God, not man. Fear is one of the most powerful weapons of the enemy, but it only takes hold when that fear is directed toward man. When we feel these arrows come our way, we need to refocus our thoughts on God.*

## **Chapter 7    Steam from a Grate**

- Faith: 2 Corinthians 5:7-9
  - “We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

### **Question #1**

When was the last time you reached out to someone who was truly in need and what was their response?

1.

### **Question #2**

Is there someone you personally know who has been “rocked” by recent events...someone like John Grey? (Example...loss of a loved one, divorce, job loss, financial ruin, personal illness, etc.) Think of something you can do to help this person within the next 30 days...identify the course of action you plan to take to show this person that you truly care, that they are not alone in their fight.

Person you know who has been “rocked” by a recent event:

1.

What you plan to do to help within the next 30 days:

2.

### **Question #3**

James Stone does not give up on John Grey and relentlessly pursues his recovery. Think about the one person in your life who relentlessly pursued your recovery or transformation. What did you learn from this person and how can you use this knowledge to help others? Quite possibly, it may be the person who brought you to the Lord! Think about how you can pass the “baton of life” on to others as well...

Who is the one person who pursued your recovery/transformation?

1.

Can you pass this “gift” on to someone else, and if so, who? When can you make this happen?

Identify the person you will reach out to:

2.

What is your plan of action/when do you think you can make this happen?

3.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 7:***

- *The mind is the gateway to the soul. We must always stay focused on Him, as He will keep us sharp. Do not, under any circumstances, allow the mind to entertain thoughts that are not from our Lord. Our greatest weapon, no matter what our personal circumstances may be, is the Word of God.*
- *We must live for the day, which means tomorrow may never come. Complacency and laziness tempt us on a daily basis, and in the process, nothing gets done. God has blessed us with the ability to make a difference in this world...we need to make every day count.*

- *We can never look at a transient or someone who is truly down and out, and believe for a minute, that we are immune to this kind of event in our lives. When we lose our humility, we lose our shield and the enemy begins to pick away at our soul. We must keep our eyes focused on Him and help those in need because this is what He expects us to do.*

## **Chapter 8 “Till Death Do Us Part”**

- Peace: 2 Corinthians 13:11
  - “Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”

### **Question #1**

George is slowly fading away right in front of Rose’s eyes and it is breaking her heart, one piece at a time. Have you ever had someone you love suffer from Alzheimer’s or Dementia, and what did you do to overcome the sadness you felt? What advice can you give to other individuals who may be faced with the same challenge today?

How did you overcome your sadness?

1.

What advice can you provide to others who may be faced with the same challenges today?

2.

### **Question #2**

Rose almost took matters into her own hands, as she watched the love of her life slowly fade away. Identify a situation when you had to trust God with His time frame instead of falling back on yours? What was the outcome and how have you taken this learning into consideration regarding similar events ever since?

Identify a situation when you totally trusted God’s timing:

1.

What was the outcome and how have you used this learning moving forward?

2.

### **Question #3**

George was able to revert back to his younger self when little Sarah fell into the rushing creek. For a moment, he went back in time and was young again. Is there an older person you know (suffering from Alzheimer's or Dementia) who could truly benefit from your kind words and willingness to just sit down and talk? If so, who is this person and when can you visit him/her within the next 30 days?

Older person you can minister to:

1.

When can you make this happen?

2.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 8:***

- *No matter how painful it is for us to watch those we love suffer; we need to remember that only God knows our limitations.*
- *We must work within God's time parameters, not ours.*
- *How we finish the race is what's most important. Don't ever for an instant think that older loved ones cannot be saved. We must never give up trying because only God knows what is in our hearts...and only He can change our hearts. Remember... when we got saved, He gave us a new heart. He can, and will, do the same for others as well...regardless of age! Stay the course and never give up. God is always in control.*

## Chapter 9 The Blue Ribbon Prize

- Thankfulness: Colossians 3:17
  - “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

### Question #1

Rather than always focusing on the events of our own day, we need to challenge ourselves to be better listeners and truly take note of the events around us...the events of others, that is! When was the last time you took a vested interest in your spouse's day? This can also be said of your children as well. Our ability to truly listen to those around us and pay attention to *their* day will make us better in everything we do.

Establish a time every day to truly listen to your spouse and/or loved ones. Identify the person (s) you are going to focus on and a time each and every day that you are going to just sit down and talk about their day. For many, this may be 15-30 minutes before bed every night. Again, our focus for this session should be *listening*.

Person (s) you are going to focus on:

- 1.

Time set aside...when? What are you hoping to accomplish through this activity?

- 2.

- 3.

### Question #2

During the man's dream, he recognizes the woman's burgundy wind-breaker. However, he is not sure where he has seen this garment before. Have you failed to recognize the little things that are done by your spouse that make such a huge difference to you and your family? Identify something that you truly appreciate about your spouse or loved one (s) and make it a point to say “thanks”. I am sure if we look hard enough, that “burgundy wind-beaker” is right in front of our eyes.

What “little thing” have you failed to recognize?

- 1.

Make it a point to say “thank you” for something that your spouse does each and every day. This recognition will send a strong message of love and will truly go a long way regarding our roles as husbands, wives, and parents.

Share with the group what it is that you have “missed” and what you plan to do about it:

- What I have missed:

2.

- My plan of action:

3.

### **Question #3**

When the man was chasing after the woman in the store, was there a part of you that thought he was going to end up with her and commit adultery? How did you feel when it turned out that the woman he was infatuated with, the one he found fascinating and exciting, was really his wife? As husbands and wives, we need to realize the greatest thrill in life is when we fall in love and we give our hearts to someone else. Talk about why you fell in love in the first place, and what you can do to make sure your spouse knows just how much you still love him/her.

Why I fell in love...what happened? (Remember when the “light went on” that this person was, in fact, the one you wanted to spend your life with!)

1.

What I plan to do in the next week to show him/her just how much I am still in love...and just how important he/she is to me:

2.

### ***Key Takeaways from Chapter 9:***

- *Our ability to listen is critical when it comes to any relationship, especially our marriage. We need to focus on a time every day when we can just sit down and talk with the ones we love. Nothing we do is more important in a relationship.*
- *Every day, we need to thank God for what He has given us. Never should we take our lives for granted, as we have been given a wonderful gift. Now, we need to utilize this gift to go out and make a difference in this world.*
- *Think about the person who had the greatest impact on your faith walk. Now, get on the phone and call that person...and tell him/her thanks for saving your life. Our assignment is to find a way to go out and do the same for someone else. After all, this is why we are here...to spread the Word.*

### ***Chapter 10 My Last Day***

- *Love: John 3:16-17*
  - *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

### **Question #1**

When Emma passed away, Stan’s life was over...he simply did not want to go on. As difficult as it is to persevere after the loss of a loved one, what can we do to somehow stay the course and find a way to go on? List three things that you believe are the key to finding this inner strength:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **Question #2**

Dorothy could sense that Stan was going through a tremendous amount of pain. However, before she knows it, he has left the diner...and Dorothy has a sinking feeling she will never see him again. Each of us knows someone who is hurting right now, someone who may be in a depressed state of mind where he/she just doesn't want to go on. When is the proper time to intervene? How do we do so in a constructive way?

When is the proper time to intervene?

- 1.

How do we do so "the right way"?

- 2.

### **Question #3**

Kids have a way of doing the impossible, and little Emma is no exception. How is she able to get Stan to think about how beautiful life really is? How does she get Stan to move forward and accept the fact that his Emma is gone, but that he will see her once again, in God's time?

How does she get Stan to see life's beauty?

- 1.

How does she get Stan to move forward, rather than look back (2 examples)?

- 2.

- 3.

**Key Takeaways from Chapter 10:**

- *The ultimate form of love was when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He is the epitome of love, and we must never lose sight of this. Every day, we need to remember the cross and what it truly stands for...we must never forget.*
- *The pain we feel when we lose our loved ones can never be minimized, but somehow we need to find a way to move on. This is what God wants us to do, and He will always be there to help us through the pain. The peace of knowing that He is in control and that He sees the big picture is what we need to focus on. Satan will try to bring us down because when we are down, we cannot further the kingdom of God. We cannot let this happen...through God's grace and strength, we will find a way to go on.*
- *Kids are incredible deliverers of peace because they have the ability to simplify everything. Just like little Emma stole Stan's heart through a simple act of love; we can do the same thing. Pain is everywhere...a simple act of kindness can undoubtedly make the difference in those around us.*

For comments or feedback, please feel free to contact me at any time....

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***“May God Bless You and Your Families Always...Keep Your Head Up and Remember to Fight the Fight. We Are All In This Together!”***