

SMALL GROUP

SPRING 2021

Dear Students,

Congratulations! Do you know how rare it is for a high school student to find and commit to a Small Group like this one? The fact that you're holding this booklet represents the reality that God has given you an incredible gift of fellowship with your peers. In this group, you have a community of Christian friends that want to help you grow in your faith. You also have one or more adult leaders who care about you and want to guide you through their teaching and example. If all that wasn't already great enough, you also have this study guide to use as a tool to help you grow in your understanding and application of God's Word!

As you journey through this semester with your small group, here are three points of advice to ensure you get the most of your time:

Be consistent – Make a personal commitment to yourself and the group to attend as consistently as possible. If you have to miss a meeting, do the lesson on your own and try to catch up with what you missed by checking in with a leader or a friend from group.

Be real – High school can be challenging. Be as honest as possible with God, your leaders, and your group about what's happening in your life. Don't bury your hurts, failures, questions, or doubts. Pretending everything is always amazing is not the path to growth.

Be open – Your small group might not always meet your expectations. Group members might be shallow, hypocritical, annoying, awkward, or fake. New people might join in the middle of the year and change the dynamic of the room. Remind yourself regularly that God is in control and that He can use anything to produce a positive result. Everyone deserves the gift of small group and God desires to bless each person in wonderful and unique ways.

Have a great semester studying Habakkuk, I John & I Timothy!

In Christ,

Jermaine

(Page 1)

Small Group

Spring 2021 Schedule

January 13.....	Habakkuk 1
January 20.....	Habakkuk 2
January 27.....	Shoreline
February 3.....	Habakkuk 3
February 10.....	1 John 1
February 17.....	1 John 2
February 24.....	Shoreline
March 3.....	1 John 3
March 10.....	1 John 4
March 17.....	1 John 5
March 24.....	Shoreline
March 31.....	1 Timothy 1
April 7.....	1 Timothy 2
April 14.....	1 Timothy 3
April 21.....	1 Timothy 4
April 28.....	Shoreline
May 5.....	1 Timothy 5
May 12.....	1 Timothy 6

Special Events

February 5-7.....	DTown
May 2.....	Senior Send Off
June 18-25.....	Camp Barnabas
July 17-24.....	Dominican Republic

(Page 2)

Before you begin...

Bring a Bible (Cell Phone Policy)

Cell phones are awesome! They are incredible tools that help us connect with others and discover endless amounts of information. However, our mobile devices can also easily become a huge distraction. For this reason, we highly encourage our Small Groups to bring a print version of the bible and to put away phones, tablets, etc. during the actual bible study portion of your time.

About Bible Translations

The best translation of the bible is...the one you actually read! Although there are many great translations, we like the translation called the New Living Translation (NLT). Editors for the NLT have done a great job making God's Word accurate and understandable.

Suggested Resources

Many Christians fall away from faith because of difficult questions. This is a tragedy because, for most of these challenging questions, there are helpful and clear answers just a few clicks away! A Christian who desires to remain unshaken in their faith, should familiarize themselves with the following resources so they can be ready for the difficult questions that are sure to come.

soniclight.com

This is your go-to online Bible study resource! It is a commentary of every book of the Bible. Perfect for going deeper.

openbible.info/topics

This website is perfect for finding bible verses related to almost any topic you can think of. What does the bible say about _____? This website has the answer!

gotquestions.org

Here you can find discussions and explanations relating to almost any question you may have in mind. Just type in a question and get ready to learn!

[Real Truth. Real Quick. YouTube Page](#)

A series of short videos from Watermark's Senior Pastor, Todd Wagner, that addresses common questions with direct answers from God's Word.

The Structure of a Small Group Meeting

Each Small Group gathering consists of hang time, someone sharing the gospel, someone sharing their 3 minute personal testimony, video or in-person Bible study (10 minutes) with corresponding discussion time (30 minutes). Bible study time includes studying a chapter of God's word and discussing how it affects or should affect our daily life. Finally, set aside time for final encouragements, reminders and prayer.

What is the Gospel?

The gospel is the epicenter of the Christian faith, the theme of the whole Bible, and the only hope of every human soul. Understanding and being able to share the gospel are foundational skills for every follower of Jesus Christ. "What is the gospel?" This is a question that will be asked at the start of each and every Small Group meeting, so be prepared. To learn more, Google "Sharing Your Faith 101" from Billy Graham, "One Verse Evangelism" from the Navigators, or "Romans Road to Salvation" from GotQuestions.org.

Below are some key questions (and follow up questions) you can use to promote the community and accountability of your Small Group. Remember, every discussion is an opportunity to point each other to Jesus Christ and the truth of God's word.

Key Accountability Questions

1. How has your time with God been this week? What have you learned about God and yourself?
2. What has inspired or encouraged you this week?
3. What has been weighing on you this week?
4. How have you struggled with sin or temptation this week?
5. How have you shared Christ with and/or shown God's love to others this week?
6. How can we pray for you or serve you (advice, encouragement, support) this week?
7. What are your hopes or goals for next week?

Key Passages about Community and Accountability

Proverbs 27:17, Proverbs 28:13, Proverbs 20:5, Proverbs 25:12, Ecclesiastes 4:8-12, Romans 14:13-23, 2 Corinthians 12:19-13:6, Galatians 6: 1-6, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 4:9-13,1 Thessalonians 5:14, James 5:15-16, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:23-25

February 5-7, 2021

DTown

watermark.org/shorelinedallas

Fourth Wednesdays

SHORELINE

watermark.org/shorelinedallas

Why Study Habakkuk?

Have you ever been frustrated with the brokenness and sin in our world? Today pornography is a billion dollar industry, sex trafficking continues, laws are being passed to legalize abortion and same sex marriage, many are lobbying for a person to be free any kind of lifestyle they want to, all in the name of love and equality. There continues to be sickness, pain, racial discrimination, divorce, suicide, depression, death. The list could go on, and we may be tempted to scream out, "God, where are you? Do you see this? Do you even care?" If that's you right now, take heart! There have been many before who have felt the way you feel right now. One of those persons being the author of the book of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk was an Old Testament prophet whose ministry came during the dark days of the southern kingdom of Judah. The nation of Babylon was becoming a dominant world power, seizing control of the Ancient Near East through war, torture and slavery. It would be only a matter of time before they got to God's people Judah. Unfortunately, at this point, God's people were not living the way they should. The last 4 kings of Judah were wicked men who rejected God, and oppressed their own people. God's judgment would soon come upon the nation because of their wholesale rejection of God and His commands. Imagine Habakkuk pleading with the leaders of Judah to turn back to God, but seeing no results. What he saw and felt is best described in Habakkuk 1:4 which says, "The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted." That verse may seem to be as much of a reality in 2021 as it was in 600 BC.

The book of Habakkuk was written to display one man's dialogue with God concerning the brokenness of his day. We would do well to learn from Habbakuk's example of not being afraid to ask hard questions, but also taking time to listen to the Lord as He answers with His word. Although Habakkuk begins with questions and frustration, he ends with praise and perspective. He ultimately understands that God is still in control of the world despite the apparent triumph of evil. May that be true of us as we apply this book to our lives!

Suggested Memory Verses

Habakkuk 2:4, Habakkuk 3:2, Habakkuk 3:16-17

January 13

Habakkuk 1

Key Points

(vv. 1-4) Habakkuk felt a burden for his nation. Injustice, wicked activity, pain & conflict marked the nation of Judah and he wanted to know where God was in all of it. We are to be followers of Christ who are burdened for our friends, family members, nation and world that are seeking to find life and pleasure outside of a relationship with Christ. What is something that is a burden in your life right now because of sin and brokenness in our world?

(vv. 1-4) God isn't expecting us to bottle up our deep hurt or frustration that we experience in this world and just "white knuckle it" through the pain. He wants you to cry out to Him! And even when it seems like He is unaware, know that God is as vigilant as ever. He cares!

(vv. 5-11) In these verses, God's response is a simple one: "Though it seems like evil and injustice reign supreme, judgment is coming, all that is wrong will ultimately be made right." No matter how "wicked" we feel like this world gets, our God is sovereign and will deal with every evil, every injustice. Thankfully He has already paid for the evil and injustice in the hearts of those who have placed their faith in Christ through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

(vv. 5-11) Israel would soon be brought under judgment and be taken into exile by the nation of Babylon. It's important to note that the relevance of this idea for us today is that though we are believers in Christ, whose evil and injustice has been paid for on the cross, our current actions, attitudes and priorities still have consequences. If we choose to live in rebellion against God, true children of God will be trained and disciplined by a loving Father who wants the best for them. See Proverbs 3:11-12.

(vv. 12-17) When Habakkuk hears that God is going to discipline the nation of Judah by using the wicked nation of Babylon, his response to God is basically "Are you kidding me? You're going to judge us with them? They are even worse than us!" See v. 13. God will sometimes bring about justice in ways that we do not understand and are maybe frustrated by. What we need to remind ourselves of in those moments is that God is at work even though we don't understand how!

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

Questions I want to ask at Small Group about this chapter:

Know and Do

In your opinion, what's the most important idea that you will take away from this chapter?

How does this chapter move you to action? After reading this chapter, what would God have you start doing, stop doing, or keep doing?

January 20

Habakkuk 2

Key Points

(v. 1) Watchtowers and guardposts were important parts of ancient cities. It was where people would stand to see off into the distance and find out if messengers, friends or enemies were approaching their city. Habakkuk wanted to bring across the idea that he was patiently waiting and watching for the Lord's response. It is so important for us to not only ask questions of God in our circumstance, but to wait patiently and expectantly for a response.

(vv. 2-3) The Lord's response to Habakkuk, and to any believer who is burdened by sin and brokenness that affects our lives is that justice, though it seems slow in coming, is certain. The lesson for us is that patience in the midst of wickedness that is done around us or to us is an attribute that we need to continue to cultivate. You don't just wake up and magically have all the patience in the world, so how do you become a more patient person?

(v. 4) This verse is famously quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11 and by the writer of Hebrews in 10:38. The reason such an obscure verse in the book of Habakkuk is repeated by New Testament writers is that it communicates a truth foundational to Christianity: Trusting in your self and your own strength leads to death, trusting in God and living a life of dependence leads to life.

(vv. 5-17) The majority of this chapter focuses on the idea that although the Lord would use a wicked nation (Babylon) to judge Judah, Babylon themselves would soon reap the fruit of their wicked way of life. They stole, murdered, tricked and dishonored others while trusting in their own strength and rejecting God. The conclusion is that evil will be judged in God's timing.

(vv. 18-20) In the midst of reminding us that evil will be judged, God reminds us that idolatry is an evil that we can all fall prey to. In ancient times and in some religions idols were carved images that man trusted in, today idols are relationships, bank accounts, homes, organizations, possessions that people trust in. The question we need to continually ask ourselves is, "Is there anything that has more of my trust than God?"

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

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Discuss

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February 3

Habakkuk 3

Key Points

(v. 1) Even though Habakkuk didn't necessarily understand or agree with God's plan for justice, when He was reminded of who God is, and that He has purpose and profit in mind no matter what we go through, his response was to submit to God in prayer and to praise Him for who He is. What situation are you experiencing where you need to submit to God and praise Him for who He is even though you may not fully understand how He is at work?

(v. 2) Habakkuk knew that God was going to judge the nation of Judah for their rebellion against Him. Habakkuk's response was to accept God's will in the situation and ask for mercy in the midst of judgment. He understood that God doesn't just punish His people because they've behaved badly, He corrects, trains and disciplines us because He loves us, and wants us to grow in our relationship with Him.

(v. 3-15) In these verses Habakkuk goes into a basic recounting of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. In the face of coming judgment upon Judah, Habakkuk recalled God's goodness that would still be present in the midst of an unpleasant time. The idea is that God is good, both when we feel like He is being good to us, and when we don't feel like it. He can be trusted at all times!

(v. 16-18) Habakkuk concludes that "Even though things aren't as they should be or as we wish they would be, God is still good and I will praise Him no matter what because I know the end goal is His glory and my good." What does it look like to rejoice in the Lord when things aren't going the way you had hoped?

(v. 19) Our strength in the midst of difficulty or discipline (brought about because of sin or the Lord teaching us to be like Him), comes from the Lord. The fact that the Lord is our strength should be a comforting thought. Without Him, the hurt, pain, loss and despair that life can bring would overcome us, but because of God, we can endure! He is good. He can be trusted.

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

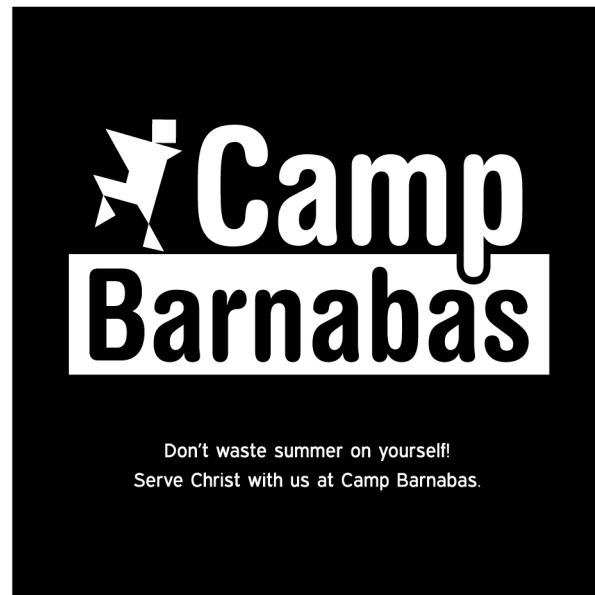
Discuss

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MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Church membership is
part of God's plan for all believers.

 **shorelinedallas**

Follow us.
We'd love to follow you!

Why Study 1 John?

In our education system, we always move from the basics of a subject to the more complex. This makes sense right? You can't do geometry and calculus if you don't understand the foundational mathematical concepts of addition, subtraction, division, multiplication etc. If the foundation of a subject isn't secure, a student is destined to struggle in that area. But if a tutor takes them back to the basics and re-teaches the foundational concepts, what usually happens is the student gradually gets better at more complex problems. That same principle applies to Christianity. If you clearly understand the basics of Christianity, the further you go in your Christian walk and face different challenges, the more likely you are to adequately and appropriately respond in those circumstances.

Enter 1 John. There probably isn't another book in the New Testament that more clearly outlines the basics of the Christian faith than 1 John. Weaved into every section of this letter to the early church and to believers in every age of history are the foundational ideas of how humans get to have fellowship with God, and how that leads to fellowship with others. Fellowship can be defined as an active relationship with God that results in fruitful, healthy relationships with others. All of which is based on trusting in the work of Christ on the cross.

In this letter, John outlines that God is light, love & life and has made a way for sinful, broken humanity to be in right relationship with him (i.e. fellowship) through Jesus Christ. He explains how a person who is in fellowship with God lives their life, renounces sin, rejects false teaching, anticipates future judgment, places a high value on love expressed through action, and is confident in their salvation. If you've never read through 1 John before, take advantage of this opportunity to learn and grow in your walk with God by reading about, meditating on and hopefully applying the truth contained in this letter to your life! Fellowship with God is essential to an eternal and abundant life! John clearly addresses how you can experience both in this letter. Let's dive in!

Suggested Memory Verses

1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:5-6, 1 John 2:15-17, 1 John 3:2, 1 John 4:7-8, 1 John 5:11-13

February 10

1 John 1

Key Points

(v. 1) John is talking about Jesus. He highlights that Jesus is eternal, that is, He has never NOT existed. At the point in history when John was alive, he heard about Jesus, he saw and related with an actual, physical being. In other words, the historical Jesus with a real body really existed, and John testifies to this reality from his personal experience.

(v. 2) Both Christian and non-Christian scholars and historians agree that a historical Jesus as the Bible gives account of really existed. Where they begin to differ is on the issue of whether or not Jesus was really the Son of God. Was the historical Jesus, really God who became a human being to bring about the possibility of eternal life for anyone who would place their faith in Him? John, and centuries of Christians have affirmed this reality.

(v. 3) When John was writing this letter, most of the believers that were alive when Jesus was on earth had all passed away. John was probably one of the few remaining from that first generation of Christ followers. He wanted to make sure that Christ's message of grace and relationship with God didn't die with his generation. We know he got his message across because you are here today hearing that same message!

(vv. 5-6, 8, 10) When God is described as light, the point being made is that God reveals what is holy. He exposes man's sin and condemns it. Much like when you turn on a light so that you can see clearly in a room, God's presence reveals our darkness, brokenness and failure to measure up to His holy standard. That's why if we claim to be in right relationship with Him but continue to live a lifestyle that says the exact opposite, it can't possibly be true that we are in true fellowship.

(vv. 7 & 9) If a believers life is marked by obedience to God, that is evidence of genuine fellowship with God. And if we choose to walk in darkness momentarily, Christ's work on the cross covers that sin when we agree with God (i.e. confess) that we were not walking in the light. Is there anything you need to confess to God and your group?

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

Questions I want to ask at Small Group about this chapter:

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In your opinion, what's the most important idea that you will take away from this chapter?

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February 17

1 John 2

Key Points

(v. 1) Because we are not yet made perfect, we WILL sin. Thankfully, God was aware this would be our reality. He made provision for the fact that we will continue to sin from time to time in our walk with Christ through the work of Christ on the cross! This is good news!

(v. 2) The point being made here is that Christ genuinely died for everyone. It doesn't mean that everyone will become a believer, but that they could. There is a line of thinking that says that Christ died ONLY for those who would eventually trust Him. That is false. Christ's death, burial and resurrection guaranteed that anyone could be saved. Anyone! Every human being has hope because of Christ, no matter where they've been, or what they've done.

(vv. 3-14) The greatest evidence of faith in Christ is a transformed life. This transformation isn't instantaneous, rather it is a process that lasts our entire lives (known as sanctification). Someone who has genuinely trusted in Christ will continually have actions, words, values, priorities and beliefs that look more and more like what is outlined in Scripture. How would you describe your current relationship with the Lord: growing, stagnant, non-existent?

(vv. 15-17) A growing Christian continually rejects the world's way of thinking. That is, they reject what culture of the day teaches us. For example, our culture tells us in many ways to "enjoy whatever you want when you want, get as much stuff as you can to make yourself happy and seek to be the most important person." These ideas are anti-Christian and should be rejected more today than you did yesterday if you're a believer.

(vv. 18-29) Another evidence of faith in Christ is the belief that He is indeed the Son of God. This may seem like a trivial issue on the surface, but the fact is very clear: Without a belief that Jesus Christ is 100% God and 100% man who lived a perfect life, and died a perfect death, and rose again on our behalf, you genuinely cannot be a Christian. Jesus simply isn't some great guy in history, He is God, He is our only hope!

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

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March 3

1 John 3

Key Points

(vv. 1-3) The truth found in these verses can be easily overlooked, but they shouldn't. The greatest miracle ever done is taking a broken, prideful, sinful human being, unable to save themselves and making them a part of the family of God through the sacrifice of God Himself. The course of our past, present and future has been miraculously changed by Christ. That is a cause for praise and thanksgiving for God's kindness, goodness and grace!

(vv. 4-10) This section is often misinterpreted. John is NOT arguing that true believers don't sin. Yes they do. We sin everyday, but John's point is that running to, and being marked by sin isn't the Christian's defining characteristic. Genuine Christians have a new identity as children of God. That is what makes Christ's work on the cross even more amazing. He died for people He knew would continue to rebel against Him daily. But He did it anyway! Not so that we would stop sinning as much, but so that we could have relationship with the Father in spite of our brokenness! Out of the overflow of that genuine relationship with Christ would eventually flow a growing rejection of sin, and a growing appetite to live like Christ. John's point is to make sin look hideous, demonic and foreign to the Christian, because it is! And in those moments when we choose to sin, we are acting in contrast to our new nature in Christ, we are partnering with the devil in his work. If that sounds gross and harsh, that is John's point. He wants the believer to be repulsed by sin and to commit themselves to abiding with Christ (through His word, His Spirit & His people). When you abide with Christ, you are acting like what you are because of Jesus, i.e. a child of God.

(vv. 11-24) John wants us to know that the way we treat others is a clear indication of whether or not we have a genuine relationship with God. A genuine Christian seeks to resolve conflict and doesn't harbor anger. A genuine Christian puts the needs of others before their own, just like Jesus. A genuine Christian doesn't just say they are a Christian, they prove it through their actions. So then what's the difference between a Christian who sends relief money to Haiti and a non-Christian who does the same thing? There honestly isn't a visible difference. The difference is a believer sends relief money because they understand what Christ has done in making them a part of God's family. The invisible difference is the Holy Spirit that indwells a follower of Christ and guides them to be selfless & generous (vs. 24).

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

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March 10

1 John 4

Key Points

(vv. 1-3) In our world today there are all kinds of religions claiming to know the way to God. There are all kinds of 'Christian' churches that claim to proclaim the gospel. How does John suggest that we tell the difference between the True Spirit and the false spirits? The clue is found in their message about Jesus Christ. If a religion, church or religious organization rejects Jesus as the Son of God become man to pay the penalty for sin, the foundation of their teaching is false.

(vv. 4-6) False teaching will be appealing to people who are not followers of Christ, and the true teachings of Christ will make them uncomfortable. The reason for this is simple: people don't want to hear their sins denounced; they don't want their pleasure seeking to be disrupted by Jesus. What are some false teachings most common in our world today?

(vv. 7-12) John harps on what should be the distinguishing character of a follower of Christ: Love. He points out that the foundational motivation for expressing love for others is the love that Christ expressed for us in the greatest act of love there is (see also John 15:13). The summary of his argument is that love originates from God and those who act in love, based on a response to love they have received through Christ, are actually revealing God to others through their actions.

(vv. 13-21) In the previous section, John argued that love expressed to others, rooted in love received from Christ, is a sign of true fellowship with God. Here, he makes the point that those who model sacrificial love have no need to fear standing before God on judgment day. Believers will never again be called into question because of their sin, Jesus already answered that call. Instead, believers will be rewarded by God in unique ways for how they loved and served others. In other words, the way you love others should make you genuinely excited and confident for the moment you stand before God. Would you say that the way you are loving people in your life right now is the way God would want you to? What steps can you take today to love others better?

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

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March 17

1 John 5

Key Points

(vv. 1-3) Here, John talks about the unique connection every believer has with every other believer. He makes the bold statement that one way a Christian shows love for other Christians is by their walk with, and obedience to God. In other words, your personal life is interconnected with the personal lives of other believers. You show how much you love other believers by the way you live your life. How much is your life proving your love for other believers right now?

(vv. 4-10) John highlights the source of a believer's victory over our satanically influenced world system. His answer is Jesus Christ whose baptism (water), crucifixion (blood) and spirit (Holy Spirit) all testify to the fact that He is capable of being the source of our victory over sin.

(vv. 11-13) There isn't a clearer explanation of a believer's assurance of salvation than these three verses. John wants his readers to understand that the source of our assurance isn't based on how we feel or how we are performing for God. Instead, the source of our confidence is Jesus. The source of your assurance of salvation is Jesus, not you!

(vv. 14-15) The source of our confidence in approaching God the Father in prayer is Jesus! Whether or not our prayers are answered isn't based on if we are living a "clean" enough life or if we "believe" strongly enough. Prayer that is answered is prayer that is God's will. God's Word, His people (other Christians) and His Spirit help us discern how we should pray in the first place.

(vv. 16-21) One way that you express love for other believers is by praying for them when we see them caught in sin. Pray for God's mercy, grace and patience to be evident in the lives of people you know who claim to be Christians but aren't living like it. The point of this section isn't to figure out what sin leads to death and what sin doesn't, but to pray for fellow believers, and have confidence that because of Jesus, we can have fellowship with God!

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

Questions I want to ask at Small Group about this chapter:

Know and Do

In your opinion, what's the most important idea that you will take away from this chapter?

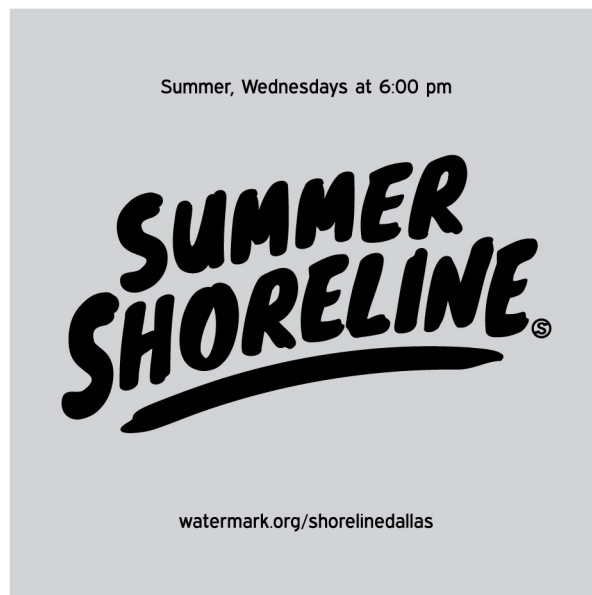
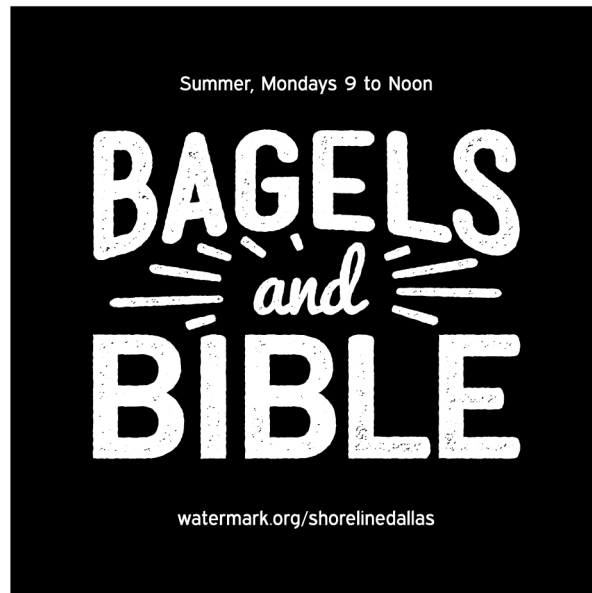
How does this chapter move you to action? After reading this chapter, what would God have you start doing, stop doing, or keep doing?

BAPTISM

Get baptized after Shoreline!
Sign up at watermark.org/baptism

SENIOR DESSERT

May 2, 2021
watermark.org/shorelinedallas



Why Study 1 Timothy?

You may or may not have heard this statement before: “The Church is the hope of the world”. What it means is that in a world driven by pleasure, known for calling evil good and good evil, marked by rebellion against God, and destined for an eternity apart from God; the church, that is believers in Christ, can bring a message of hope, mercy and grace to our world. The message of the gospel, that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again to offer eternal, abundant life to all who believe is the message of hope carried by the church. What our world needs today is a church that believes this message, teaches this message and allows this message to transform their lives and relationships with others. If you are a Christian, you are a part of the church, and your mission is to teach and live out this message of hope. 1 Timothy offers us clarity on how we should actually live out this mission!

1 Timothy was a letter written by the apostle Paul to his friend, brother, disciple and ministry partner Timothy. Paul had left his young protégé as the senior pastor of the church in Ephesus that Paul had planted years earlier. The church of Ephesus had now handed over its leadership to this young man. Imagine how intimidating that task must have seemed for Timothy! Imagine certain members of the church wishing their old pastor Paul was there instead. Imagine how nervous Timothy must have been because he wanted to do a great job leading this local expression of God’s church. For those reasons and much more, Paul wrote this letter to offer encouragement to a young leader and give him an outline of the expectations for God’s church there in Ephesus, and any other Christian church that would ever be established.

If you are a high school student and you profess to be a follower of Christ, the book of 1 Timothy is a book that you have got to spend some time in. It will encourage you to be bold in living out your faith in an increasingly hostile world. It will explain to you how the church, that is, a local gathering of believers, is supposed to function if it is going to live out its mission of bringing hope to a world devoid of hope. This letter will equip you with knowledge and encouragement necessary to fulfill your part in the greater role of the church. Let’s go!

Suggested Memory Verses

1 Timothy 1:5, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 1 Timothy 4:8, 1 Timothy 4:12

March 31

1 Timothy 1

Key Points

(vv. 1-7) One of the first responsibilities of church leaders is to defend their congregation against false teachers. You may not necessarily be in “leadership” officially at a church, but the truth is that if you are a believer, there are ways in which you are a leader. One of your responsibilities as a leader is to protect others from falling prey to false teaching. Whether that is friends, classmates, siblings, teammates or parents. If you see or know of someone believing and living based on false teaching, you have a responsibility and opportunity to lovingly and truthfully correct them. Who do you need to reach out to that may be getting trapped by false teaching?

(vv. 8-11) Here, Paul makes the point that false teachers were using the Old Testament (Mosaic) law for another purpose than it was intended. He argues that the Law is good for its intended purpose which was to expose the sin and brokenness in our own hearts and lives and our inability to abide by the Law without an external force acting on our behalf, namely Christ. When you read a list like this one, you should see yourself somewhere in it and realize your desperate need for Christ's intervention!

(vv. 12-17) Paul's message here is abundantly clear: There is no one too sinful that God cannot save. There is no one too far gone that God cannot redeem them! The good news of the gospel is that God can take His greatest enemies and make them His finest servants. The same man who rebelled against God and purposed to use his life to destroy Christians became one of the greatest missionaries of all time as he preached the gospel and planted churches all around the known world. The message is that no matter where you think you are in relation to God right now, there is hope for you because of Christ. That is some good news!

(vv. 18-20) In this section, Paul encourages Timothy to stand firm in his beliefs and convictions no matter how others may walk away, oppose, or persecute him. Paul names a couple guys that strayed from standing strong in the faith and have now been put under church discipline (handed over to Satan) in hopes that they will repent. Is there any belief about Christianity that you are currently doubting because of peer pressure or what culture is teaching?

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

Questions I want to ask at Small Group about this chapter:

Know and Do

In your opinion, what's the most important idea that you will take away from this chapter?

How does this chapter move you to action? After reading this chapter, what would God have you start doing, stop doing, or keep doing?

April 7

1 Timothy 2

Key Points

(vv. 1-7) Prayer should be a distinguishing characteristic of every believer. Believers should constantly pray for the salvation of others, offer prayers of thanksgiving to God and pray for governmental leadership to fulfill its purpose of prosecuting evil and celebrating good. When was the last time you prayed for people in authority over you? Take some time today to pray for parents, teachers, pastors, our president, and other government officials.

(v. 8) Paul points out that the internal character of the members of a local church is of utmost importance. Men who lead in prayer should do so “lifting up holy hands” which is a metaphorical way of saying they should be living lives that are honorable to God at all times. The reason for this is that broken human relationships affect one’s ability to pray and to receive answers to prayer. In other words, it makes no sense to worship God corporately when interpersonal relationships are not where they should be (see. Matthew 5:22-24).

(vv. 9-10) Women are challenged with the idea that what should be the most attractive thing about them isn’t the way they look, but rather the kind of life that they live every day. He isn’t arguing that women shouldn’t spend time taking care of their outward appearance, but that they should spend more time developing godly character.

(vv. 11-15) Paul’s point here is that in an orderly worship service, men and women should serve in different roles that have nothing to do with superiority and inferiority. Because God created man first, it’s clear that He intends for men to lead women. Because of the chaos that ensues when these roles are reversed (see the Fall in the garden of Eden), men should assume their responsibility of leadership. Because God has created a unique role of influence in the church, the home and society for women, they should spend time investing in that role and allowing men to fulfill their role of leadership as God has ordained. Some women are gifted with the ability to teach and lead, and these gifts should be exercised within appropriate contexts.

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

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April 14

1 Timothy 3

Key Points

(v. 1) The word “overseer” used in most bible translations is a fancy word for the leaders of your church, so think of a pastor, a church’s elders, or any other men that have visible and significant leadership responsibility at a given church. One way to summarize an overseer’s responsibility is to say that a person in that role within a church is responsible for the theology a church believes in, the application of that theology to life, and the daily functioning and operation of that church. The Church (all believers everywhere) is God’s body, and overseers are responsible for leading God’s church in the way God would have them be led. This is a distinguished honor and a significant call. Your pastors have a great weight of responsibility on their shoulders!

(vv. 1-7) These verses outline the qualifications for the noble but difficult task of being an overseer. Each of the 15 qualifications fall under the umbrellas of an overseer’s character (is he a man of integrity) and competency (can he perform the leadership responsibilities required). But in another sense, this list of qualifications should be a great list for each of us to pay attention to. The reason is that although we may not all hold the office of overseer/pastor, we are all pastors/leaders in some sense. You lead your friend group, team, siblings, small group, co-workers, classmates, family etc. These verses give you an idea of what it looks like to lead and pastor them well. How are you doing at modeling the character necessary to lead others well?

(vv. 8-16) In Acts 6:1-6 we find the appointment of the first ever deacons in the church. Some churches still have official positions for deacons, but because this word literally means “humble servant” more and more churches are letting go of the official title as they challenge every member of that church to be humble servants within their circles of influence. And as you can tell through this section, being a humble servant starts with being a person of character and integrity. In fact, Paul reminds us that all believers should be marked by integrity, and we have the power within us to pursue integrity because of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

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April 21

1 Timothy 4

Key Points

(vv. 1-3) The Holy Spirit through Scripture (Mark 13:22, 2 Peter 3:1-18) prophesied that as Christ's second coming gets closer, some legitimate believers will stop following Christianity and some pretend Christians will be led astray by false doctrine. We must realize that people walking away from true Christianity to believe an illegitimate version due to false teaching finds its source in demonic activity. We are in a war every day! For the Ephesian church, false teachers were saying that abstinence from physical things (marriage & food) was essential for spiritual purity. For us today, there are too many false teachers and teachings to even start to list! Be on guard!

(vv. 4-6) The responsibility of a church leader (which includes you) is to point out what is true when false teachers propagate their message. But how do you do this? How do you get ready to point out what is true? Verse 6 gives us two ways. First, we need to consistently nourish ourselves on the truth of God's word. Second, we need to consistently put ourselves in a position where we can be taught truth from others. The two ways we learn what is true encourages us to faithfully spend time in God's word and to faithfully attend church, small group, listening to podcasts of sermons, and build a habit of continual learning. How are you doing in these areas?

(vv. 7-11) Paul reminds Timothy and us that disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness has benefit for our present lives and the one to come. Because of this, growing in our closeness and conformity to Christ (godliness) should be our top priority and greatest endeavor!

(vv. 12-16) Paul's message here is to let your life back up your words. If you think adults, parents, teachers, peers etc. look down on you, your call is to demonstrate maturity beyond your years by living a godly life that is an example that others can follow. As a church leader, Timothy was to devote himself to reading God's word at church, explaining God's word, and sharing wisdom on certain topics. He was to use the gifts he had been given by God. He was to walk in integrity privately and publicly. The responsibility of Timothy is your responsibility as well!

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

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(Page 36)

May 5

1 Timothy 5

Key Points

(vv. 1-2) Timothy was to treat others with the same dignity, honor and respect that he would treat his very own family members because in a very real way, the members of his church were his family. The same is true for you. How are you doing at treating your “family” the way this passage calls you to? What relationship should you go seek reconciliation in if you are going to obey the call of these verses?

(vv. 3-16) Throughout the entire bible, widows, foreigners and orphans are special objects of God’s mercy. The challenge to us is that ostracized members of society should be first of all taken care of by their own family and if there is no family alive or in the picture, then the church’s call is to step in and help. But because a church’s resources are usually limited, churches need to be sure to clearly outline the criteria that qualifies someone to receive financial assistance from them. For example in this section, a widow who would receive church assistance had to have no family available to assist her, she must have been a woman who was faithful in her marriage and she had to be someone known for character and integrity.

(vv. 17-19) From these verses, we get the concept that men who hold the church office of an elder which involves some oversight of church affairs, and some preaching and teaching should be “doubly honored” for their leadership and service. The “double honor” idea includes within it a special respect for the person holding such office, financial provision (getting paid), and the joy that comes with a job well done. How can you honor your church leaders today?

(vv. 20-25) A great summary of these ideas is that when it comes to appointing or removing church leaders, patience is key. Patience to observe someones character should precede their selection to leadership. Patience to get all sides of a story should precede removing a church leader. Patience & grace should mark the process of restoring a disciplined leader to a leadership position.

This Week's Assignments

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_____ will lead the discussion.

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May 12

1 Timothy 6

Key Points

(vv. 1-2) Paul is not condoning slavery here. In fact, the slavery reference here is not the same thing as the modern day slavery that takes advantage of people groups. In other writings, Paul told slaves that if there was an opportunity for freedom, they should take it (see 1 Corinthians 7:21). Here, Paul wants to address the heart of the issue: As people's hearts are gradually transformed by Christ, they begin to treat each other with dignity & respect. Paul's hope is that society at large will change and even reject some of its unhealthy norms. For that to happen, believers should stand out as unique in their work ethic, and treatment of others. This demonstrates to a lost & broken world that Christ makes a difference today!

(vv. 3-10) Paul points out all the dangers of not seeking and living in truth: every type of unhealthy interpersonal conflict that you can think of finds its root in the rejection of truth. The most notable fruit of rejecting truth here is an unhealthy view of money. When truth is rejected, people begin to think that money is ultimate, people begin to use ministry as a means of making money as opposed to serving others, people begin to chase after money at all costs, leaving only destruction in their wake. Money itself is a good gift of God, but when it is viewed as an ultimate source of satisfaction, it becomes dangerous and destructive!

(vv. 11-16) Here, Paul gives an alternative to chasing and being controlled by money. He challenges us with that idea that to be godly leaders, we must flee, pursue, fight & take hold of. What we gather from these verbs is that following Jesus isn't passive, there is work to be done if we are going to be leaders whose lives are marked by integrity. In your life, what do you currently need to flee from, pursue, fight or take hold of?

(vv. 17-21) Timothy is challenged to offer those who are rich a godly perspective on money and how it should be stewarded. If you are reading this, even though you may not feel like it, you are rich (compared to most of the world)! You have a responsibility for gratitude, generosity and good works! How are you doing at using what God has given you as a blessing to others?

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Discuss

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KNOWN & TAUGHT ABOUT ACCEPTED JESUS CHALLENGED TO GROW



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