

Praying for you. 🙏

Don't bother.

**I WANT TO
BELIEVE, BUT...**

God didn't listen.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

PLEASE DO NOT DUPLICATE.
MAHALO!

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Created in humility and love by:



Small Group Curriculum Team

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OUR MISSION...

LOVE GOD. LOVE PEOPLE. MAKE DISCIPLES.

Know God. Find Freedom. Discover God's Plans. Make A Difference.

OUR VALUES...

Services | Saved People Attend Services.

Regularly attending and inviting others to our weekly services is a vital part of God's mission for your life.

Small Groups | You Can't Do Life Alone.

The Christian life is more than a belief. It's belonging to God's family. Small groups meet during the week and provide encouragement, direction, laughs and support through the ups and downs of life.

Serving | Saved People Serve.

God shaped you to make a difference in this world by serving others with your gifts, talents, and interests.

Self-Feeding | Learners and Doers of God's Word.

The number one way God speaks to you is through His written word in the Bible. Reading and feeding on God's word daily is the common denominator for every great man and woman of God.

Stewardship | You Can't Out Give God.

We believe that we are all stewards (managers) of what God has given to us.



I WANT TO BELIEVE, BUT...

Series Overview

It can be difficult to believe in a God we cannot see. We often wonder why God didn't answer our prayers, why God allows suffering in the world, or why we can't feel His presence. In this series, we'll learn how to navigate through these questions and discover who God truly is!

The Ultimate Goal Of This Course

That in studying the word of God with others,
you will become more like JESUS!

Series Scripture

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

(Mark 12:30-31)

Tips To A Successful Group

Host Tips

- 1. Make new people feel welcomed.** Take time to introduce new people.
- 2. Starting and finishing on time.** Doing this will show your small group you value their time.
- 3. Break out into smaller and/or same-gender groups.** This can increase more transparent conversations and provide more time for each person to join the conversation.
- 4. Shared learning.** Give advice from your own personal experiences rather than something you may have read from a book.
- 5. Plan something fun.** Try to plan something fun with all your group members, such as a day at the beach, movie night, etc.

Group Tips

- 1. Turn off or silence cell phones.** As a courtesy to those who are sharing in your group, please try to stay off your phones unless for emergencies.
- 2. Make group a priority.** Communicate in advance when you will be unable to attend by calling and/or texting your host.
- 3. Confidentiality is important.** If possible, what is said in small group, stays in small group. One motto groups use is: Share “nothing, to nobody, never” outside of the group.
- 4. No guilt, No shame.** This series is not meant to guilt or shame anyone into doing anything.
- 5. Avoid talking or teaching too much.** Small groups are designed for everyone to share and grow together.

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ON-DEMAND GOD

Start with an Icebreaker Question



If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to introduce yourselves.

To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following question:

Have you ever binge watched anything? Share with your group.



Please Read What To Expect

Let's get a big picture of what we'll be learning today...

Living in a day and age where we can get what we want when we want it with the simple touch of a button, we can sometimes project that expectation on to God. In this session, we'll learn about how God is so much more than an on-demand God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

At this time, please break into smaller groups of 2-4 for the discussion question section. Have a great discussion!

1.) How do you naturally react when you don't get what you want and when you want it? Share with your group.

2.) Many people conclude that if God didn't do what they know He could've done when they asked for him to do it, then He either isn't real, He isn't good, or He simply doesn't care. Take a moment to think back to your childhood. Can you think of a time when you thought your parents were being unfair for saying "no" to something you wanted? How has your perspective changed since then? Share your experience with your group.

3.) In an era where everything is available on-demand, some people have developed a habit of projecting that same expectation onto God. The key to remember is that God is not an "on-demand" God. It's important to come to the understanding that God doesn't exist to serve us, but we exist to serve Him. Read the following scripture:

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you." (1 Samuel 12:24)

This scripture encourages us to faithfully serve the Lord out of a heart of gratitude for all that He has done for us. **Write down a list of reasons that you can be grateful to God for:**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4.) In order to break away from viewing God as an “on-demand” God, we need to have a better understanding of who He truly is. Below, read a couple of truths about God.

i. God’s heart is always loving.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

ii. God’s ways are always higher.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Can you think of a time when you really wanted something and eventually learned later that God had something better for you? Share with your group.

5.) The most important lesson to learn is that the truest form of contentment can, and only will, be found in one person: God. Read the scripture below:

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...” (Psalm 23:4)

This scripture is the perfect reminder of how our heart should be toward God. When we learn to live with the understanding that God’s presence is always enough, we will no longer desire an “on-demand” God. To work toward this, think of practical ways that you can apply this scripture into your life. Then, fill in the blank below.

Even when _____, I will be okay because I know You (God) are with me. (i.e. when I experience financial struggles, when I don’t get the promotion I’ve been working toward, etc.)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Expecting God to operate like a wish granting genie is a false expectation that can only be eliminated from our minds and hearts as we draw nearer to God Himself. *Prayer & thanksgiving* are excellent and effective ways to grow closer to Him.

This week, commit to taking the following action steps:

- i. Develop a habit of listing 3 things that you're grateful for every day and thank God for those things at the end of each day.**

- ii. Pray for the following points:**
 - Trust that God's ways are higher and greater than yours (*Isaiah 55:8-9*)
 - Remember that nothing can separate you from God's love (*Romans 8:38-39*)
 - Take comfort in knowing that God is always with you, even in the hardest times (*Psalms 23:4*)

CLOSE IN PRAYER



Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other's prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other's prayer requests to remember throughout the week.

Sample Prayer:

"God, thank You for all that we've learned in this lesson. We know that You do not exist to serve our wants and needs, but we exist to serve You. Please forgive us for ever getting that twisted. Lord, we are grateful that You have a plan for our lives that is greater than anything we could have ever wanted for ourselves. Teach us to trust in You. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen."

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request



21 DAYS OF PRAYER IS FOR YOU!

If you sense God has more for your life, 21 Days of Prayer is a great place to start believing Him for all that He has for you. As you practice seeking Him first, He will move on your behalf like never before. You will start to see the power of prayer impact your relationships, work, family, and every area of your life.

For the next 21 days, our church will be praying together. We have written out scriptures and prayers for each day to make it easy to follow along. If you decide to pray beyond the written prayers we've provided, then we highly encourage you to do so. For those who would like to continue after their 21 day commitment, we've added an extra 7 days of prayers that focuses on those we will invest in and invite to church.

When you discover the beauty of daily conversation with Him, you'll experience the presence of God that will change your life. Let's get started!

References:

Church of the Highlands "Personal Prayer Guide"

(Link to guide: <https://21days.churchofthehighlands.com/files/prayer-journal-2018.pdf>)



PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS:

CREATING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

Prayer is most effective when it isn't something we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate. To understand how to have a lifestyle of prayer, we can look at the example Jesus gave during His life on earth.

HAVE A CERTAIN TIME

Jesus got up early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. Make a daily appointment with God – whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening – and faithfully keep it.

HAVE A CERTAIN PLACE

Jesus had a specific place He went to pray. Having a designated place to pray helps us remove distractions and frees us to worship and pray out loud.

HAVE A CERTAIN PLAN

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave them a prayer outline. We call it “The Lord's Prayer.” As we pray every day, our plans for our prayer time can vary, maybe including worship music, Bible reading, and quiet time to listen to God. It doesn't always have to look the same; it just helps when we have a plan for connecting regularly with God.

PRAYER: DAY 1 | AUGUST 12

SCRIPTURE: “I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!” (Psalm 121:1-2)

PRAYER

“Father, I acknowledge that everything I need today will come from You. You made the heavens and the earth; You are more than capable of handling any situation I’m dealing with, so I give it to You completely (specifically talk to God about what is on your mind and heart right now and give it to Him). I look to you to help me, sustain me, and give me Your peace. Remind me of Your hope and power today. Thank You in advance for taking care of my needs.”

PRAYER: DAY 2 | AUGUST 13

SCRIPTURE: “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.” (Psalm 100:4)

PRAYER

“Father God, You are good, and You deserve all my praise and more. Thank You for the many ways You have blessed me and for watching over me (tell Him specific things in your life that you’re grateful for. Thank Him for something new that you’ve never thanked Him for before). I want to experience Your presence and Your love in a fresh way today, Jesus. I thank you that Your mercies are new every day. I thank you for Who You are and all You have done for me.”

PRAYER: DAY 3 | AUGUST 14

SCRIPTURE: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

PRAYER

“Father God, I ask You to search my heart. If You find anything in me that is offensive, please show me and help me remove it from my life. Lead me to live a life that draws people to You. Help me live my life on earth in a way that impacts eternity.”

PRAYER: DAY 4 | AUGUST 15

SCRIPTURE: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (James 4:10)

PRAYER

“God, You have promised that if I humble myself before You, You will lift me up. I recognize today that I cannot succeed on my own, and I need You in every moment. I humble myself before You, and I ask You to work in and through me today. My time, efforts, thoughts, and words are Yours today (name specific parts of your day and give them to God). Use me for Your purposes, Lord. I trust that You will be with me and lift me up.”

PRAYER: DAY 5 | AUGUST 16

SCRIPTURE: “Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge.” (Psalm 62:8)

PRAYER

“Father, in Your Word You invite me to pour out my heart to You. You are my refuge, and I know that anything I think, feel, or do is ok to bring to You. Knowing that You are a safe place for me, I come to You and give You everything on my heart (talk to God about the specific things that are on your heart today). From what is worrying me to what is delighting me, what I hope for to what I’m afraid of, I bring it all to You because I know I can trust You. Help me and guide me in every area, in Jesus’ Name.”

PRAYER: DAY 6 | AUGUST 17

SCRIPTURE: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

PRAYER

“Father, I am so comforted by the fact that You will never leave me. You are always with me, and I am safe with You. As I go through my life and take on each new situation, I’m comforted by knowing I’m not alone because You are by my side. Help me feel Your presence. When I feel uncertain or afraid, I pray You will comfort me through Your Holy Spirit and remind me that I am never alone because You, the Almighty God, have promised to always be with me.”

PRAYER: DAY 7 | AUGUST 18

SCRIPTURE: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

PRAYER

“Lord Jesus, I confess all of my sins to You. I repent and turn away from them. I’m sorry for the wrong I have done. I confess the times I should have stepped up to do right and did nothing instead. I lay it all down at Your feet. I submit my thoughts, words, actions, and inactions to You. Thank You, God, for forgiving and making a way for me through Your Son, Jesus. Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. You died on the cross for my sins and rose to life again on the third day. I confess all my sins and repent. I receive Your forgiveness and ask You to cleanse me from all sin. Thank You for redeeming me, setting me free, making me holy, and giving my life purpose.”

