

## 2026-06-14 Small Group Guide

### Small Group Guide: "How Do You Stop Petting Lions?"

#### Opening Prayer

Begin with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to give courage to stand firm in faith.

#### Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: If you could choose one piece of armor (shield, helmet, sword, etc.), which would you pick and why? What does that reveal about how you approach spiritual battles?

#### Sermon Overview

This sermon challenges believers to stop "petting lions" (playing with temptation) and instead stand firm on the wall as watchmen, fully armored in Christ. It calls us to move from comfortable Christianity to costly discipleship, from passive faith to active defense of what we believe.

#### Key Takeaways

The Call to Stand - We must put on the complete armor of God, not just the pieces we find comfortable.

The Cost of Discipleship - Following Christ requires dying to self and being willing to stand even when we're the only one standing.

Identity in Christ - Our armor begins with knowing whose we are and who we serve.

Legacy of Faith - We're called to build together, sometimes by fighting on the front lines, sometimes by holding up the arms of others.

Vigilance Against Distraction - We cannot pet lions (entertain temptation)

and expect to walk away unharmed.

## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: The Call to Stand (15 minutes)

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

The sermon asks: "Do you stand like Rack, Shack, and Ben, or do you bow like the comfortably numb?" What does this question mean to you? Where do you see yourself?

What does it mean to put on the "whole armor of God" versus just parts of it? Which pieces do you tend to neglect?

The pastor said, "Sometimes when He calls you to stand, you're just supposed to make a difference to one." How does this change your perspective on what it means to be faithful?

### Section 2: The Cost of Discipleship (15 minutes)

Read Luke 9:23-26

The sermon states: "Your armor is forged in surrender." What does this mean practically in your daily life?

Reflect on this question from the sermon: "Are you willing to give up? Let Him control all so that He can orchestrate the ultimate win?" What areas of your life are you still trying to control?

How does our example (what we actually do) impact our ability to disciple others?

### Section 3: The Watchman's Role (15 minutes)

Read Isaiah 62:6 and Mark 13:33-37

The sermon lists what watchmen do: ask, listen, pray, seek, and stand. Which of these comes most naturally to you? Which is most challenging?

"Standing on the wall is active intercession. It is not passively waiting." What's the difference between active and passive faith in your life right now?

Review the "Questions" poem from the sermon. Which question resonates most with you and why?

Section 4: Legacy and Community (15 minutes)

Read Exodus 17:8-12 (Moses, Aaron, and Hur)

The sermon asks: "What do you want your legacy to be?" How would you answer that question?

Sometimes our call is not to fight on the front lines but to "hold up the arms" of others. Who in your life needs you to hold up their arms right now?

How is this group helping you stand on the wall? How can we better support one another?

Section 5: What Lion Do You Choose? (15 minutes)

Read 1 Peter 5:8-11

The sermon's title comes from the idea of "petting lions" - entertaining temptations we know are dangerous. What "lions" do you find yourself petting?

"Why do you struggle with what you know is true? Where's your heart? What do you choose to do?" How would you honestly answer these questions?

The pastor ended with a call to action regarding voting and standing for

biblical values. How do you respond to the statement: "If He's Lord of anything, He's Lord of all"?

## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Daily Armor

Each morning, literally pray through Ephesians 6:14-17, putting on each piece of armor intentionally

Journal what battles you faced and how the armor helped

#### Option 2: Watchman's Prayer

Choose 2-3 people to pray for by name daily this week

Ask God to show you how to "hold up their arms"

#### Option 3: Lion Identification

Identify one "lion" you've been petting (a temptation you've been entertaining)

Create a specific plan to stop, including accountability with someone from this group

#### Option 4: Legacy Audit

Write out what you want your legacy to be

Identify 3 concrete actions you can take this month to build that legacy

Group Action Step

Accountability Partners: Pair up with someone in the group this week.

Share:

One area where you need to "armor up"

One "lion" you're struggling with  
One way you want to stand on the wall

Check in with each other before next week's meeting.

Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

If I'm honest, where am I "comfortably numb" rather than standing firm?

What is God specifically calling me to stand for right now?

What am I holding onto that I was "never meant to keep"?

How am I investing in a legacy of faith for the next generation?

Closing

Read together: Romans 5:3-5

"We also glory in our sufferings, because we know suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Final Prayer Focus:

Pray for courage to stand on the wall

Pray for strength to put on the whole armor of God

Pray for wisdom to stop petting lions

Pray for this group to be watchmen for one another

Before Next Week

Read Nehemiah 4 (the full chapter about building and defending the wall)

Memorize Ephesians 6:10-11

Complete your chosen practical application

Connect with your accountability partner

Leader Notes

Be Sensitive: The sermon includes strong political implications. Guide discussion to focus on biblical principles rather than partisan politics.

Create Safety: Some may struggle with admitting the "lions" they're petting. Model vulnerability as a leader.

Encourage Honesty: The questions are meant to convict and inspire, not condemn. Create space for honest struggle.

Follow Up: Check in with group members during the week, especially regarding accountability partnerships.