

7-12-26 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: "Tug of War - Authority & Sin"

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth, and to help group members be honest and vulnerable as you discuss together.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: When you were growing up, what was one rule or authority figure you struggled with the most? Why do you think that was?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

Sin is crouching at our door daily - We're in a spiritual war whether we acknowledge it or not

The enemy knows our weaknesses - Satan studies us and knows exactly what it takes to ruin our day

We can't be good on our own - Even our best efforts fall short without God's help

Authority is established by God - Romans 13 teaches us that all governing authorities are ordained by God

Freedom comes through obedience - True freedom isn't doing whatever we want, but surrendering to God's authority

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Battle (15 minutes)

1. The pastor mentioned that we often don't wake up thinking "I'm going to war today." Why do you think we're so unaware of the spiritual battle happening around us?

2. Read Genesis 4:6-7. God told Cain that "sin is crouching at your door." What does this image tell us about how sin works? Can you share an example (without specific details) of when you've felt sin "crouching" at your door?

3. The sermon pointed out that when we're about to sin, we often look around to see who's watching. Why is secrecy such a clear indicator that we're about to do something wrong?

Authority Issues (15 minutes)

4. Read Romans 13:1-7 together. What's your honest reaction to these verses? What makes submitting to authority difficult?

5. The pastor said, "There is no authority except that which God has established." How does this truth change the way we should view:

Government leaders we disagree with?

Workplace supervisors?

Church leadership?

6. When is it appropriate to question or resist authority? How do we balance submission with standing for truth?

Personal Application (15 minutes)

7. The sermon mentioned that Cain nursed his grudge "like a mother with a little baby." What grudges or resentments are you currently nursing? What would it look like to hand those over to God?

8. "If you're not under the authority of God, how can you throw stones at somebody else that's not operating that way?" Where in your life are you most tempted to judge others while not fully submitting to God yourself?

**9. The pastor said the greatest part about obedience is "freedom from guilt." Have you experienced this? Share a time when obeying God brought unexpected freedom.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE to focus on

Option 1: Daily Armor Each morning this week, take 5 minutes to "put on the armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-18). Pray through each piece and acknowledge the spiritual battle you're entering.

Option 2: Authority Audit Make a list of the authorities in your life (government, work, church, family). Pray for each one by name this week, asking God to give them wisdom and asking Him to help you submit with a right heart.

Option 3: Sin Accountability Identify one area where "sin is crouching at your door." Share this with one trusted person in the group and ask them to check in with you this week about it.

Option 4: Stop and Lock the Brakes The pastor mentioned we need to "lock up the brakes" when tempted. This week, when you feel temptation rising, literally stop what you're doing, take three deep breaths, and pray: "God, give me Your way of escape right now."

Accountability Questions

To ask each other throughout the week:

Did you start your day acknowledging the spiritual battle?

Where did you struggle most with authority this week?

When did you feel sin "crouching at your door"? What did you do?

How did you experience God's freedom this week?

Memory Verse

Genesis 4:7 - "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray together for:

Awareness of the spiritual battle we face daily

Grace to submit to God's authority and the authorities He's placed in our lives

Freedom from specific sins that are "crouching at our doors"

The Holy Spirit's power to master sin rather than being mastered by it

Each other's specific struggles shared during discussion

Leader Notes

Be prepared for people to have strong reactions to Romans 13, especially regarding government authority. Keep the conversation focused on God's Word rather than political opinions.

Create safety for people to share about their struggles with sin without fear of judgment.

Don't rush the application section - this is where transformation happens. Follow up during the week with group members about their chosen challenge.

Model vulnerability by sharing your own struggles with authority and sin when appropriate.