

2026-09-13 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide

"Tug of War: Letting God Take the Lead"

Overview

This session explores the internal struggle every believer faces between surrendering to God and relying on our own strength. The sermon challenged us to move beyond a passive faith into active obedience, trusting that God equips us for what He calls us to do even when we feel unready.

Key Takeaways

1. Faith Was Never Meant to Be Solo God intentionally places people in our lives so that we grow together. Acts 17:26 reminds us that these connections are not accidental. We are designed to need one another, and community is part of how God shapes us.
2. Surrender Precedes Victory There are battles we simply cannot win through sheer willpower. The path to overcoming sin and fear begins with surrendering to Christ, not straining harder on our own.
3. God Trusts Us More Than We Trust Ourselves Just as Jesus sent the twelve disciples out with little preparation and no supplies, He still calls ordinary, imperfect people to do extraordinary things through His power. His faith in us often exceeds our faith in ourselves.
4. Obedience Requires Action, Not Just Agreement Believing in Christ and following Christ are not the same thing. James makes clear that even demons believe. True faith moves. It responds. It goes.
5. Grace Is Not a License to Stay Comfortable The gospel calls us to receive salvation and then work it out, exercising it through service, obedience, and participation in what God is doing in the world around us.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Ice Breaker)

Think of a time someone trusted you with a responsibility that surprised you. How did it feel in the moment? How did it feel afterward?

Going Deeper

The sermon described the "hand game" as a picture of our walk with Christ, constantly pulling our hand out from under His and placing it back on top. In what areas of your life do you find yourself doing this most often? What makes it difficult to stay under His hand?

The disciples were sent out with no supplies, no script, and no guarantee of how things would go. What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from stepping out in obedience when God calls you to something uncomfortable or unfamiliar?

The pastor described several people God placed in his life, a shop teacher, an English teacher, a state trooper, who each spoke truth into him at key moments. Who has God placed in your life to speak truth, and did you receive it or resist it? Is there someone God may be calling you to be that person for right now?

The sermon drew a distinction between doing things in our own strength and doing things that are only possible with God. Can you identify something in your life right now that you know God is asking you to do but that you cannot accomplish without His help? What is holding you back from taking the first step?

The pastor said that when we begin serving Christ and others, we often find we have less time and less desire for the things that once tripped us up. Have you experienced this in your own life? What does it tell us about how God designs spiritual growth to work?

The sermon ended with a direct challenge: identify one thing God has called

you to that you have said no to, ignored, or walked away from. Are you willing to name it in this group? What would it look like to say yes this week?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

Identify and Name It. Spend time in quiet prayer and ask God to bring to mind the one thing He has been calling you toward that you have been avoiding. Write it down. Tell someone in your group.

Take One Step. Whatever God has been nudging you toward, identify the single next step, not the whole plan, just one step. Commit to taking it before the group meets again.

Invest in Someone. Think of one person in your life who may need someone to speak truth, encouragement, or direction into them. Pray about how God might use you to do that this week.

Examine Your Excuses. Honestly evaluate how you are spending your time. Are the things filling your hours reflecting the priorities God has placed on your heart? Ask a trusted friend or group member to help you see your blind spots.

Pray for the Harvest. Following the call in Matthew chapter 9 to pray for workers in the harvest, commit to praying daily this week that God would show you your specific place in His field and give you the courage to work it.

Closing Reflection

The pastor reminded us that somewhere over the last two thousand years, someone kept the gospel alive when it cost them something. They did not take shortcuts. They did not wait for a more convenient time. Because of their obedience, we heard.

Close your group time by asking each person to answer this question quietly

or aloud:

"What is the one thing I am willing to stop holding back from God this week?"

Then pray together, asking God to replace fear with trust, excuses with courage, and comfort with purpose.

Suggested Scripture for Further Study

Mark 6:6-13 - The sending of the twelve

Matthew 10:1-10 - The authority and instructions given to the disciples

Acts 17:26 - God's intentional placement of people in our lives

James 2:19 - The difference between belief and living faith

Matthew 6:33 - Seeking the kingdom first

2 Peter 1 - Participating in the divine nature