

08

THE SON
HAS
AUTHORITY

LEADER GUIDE



the **GOSPELPROJECT.**

ADULTS



SUMMER | 2026

GOD'S WORD FOR YOU

A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel's behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God's people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and to restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But on the third day, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ's work to the world. Empowered by God's Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. By God's grace in Christ, repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God's judgment and live joyfully in God's presence for all eternity. God's message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.

CONTENTS

Being a Trellis for a New Group	6
The Gospel Project Scope and Sequence	8
How to Use the Leader Guide	12
The Son Has Authority	16
Capernaum in Jesus's Day	50
The Chosen Disciples	84
The Omnipotence of God	128
6 Ways to Make the Most of Sunday School This Summer	160
The Discipline of Prayer	162

UNIT 22: RESPONSES TO JESUS

SUGGESTED FOR
THE WEEK OF

	Memory Verses	19
June 7	Session 1 The Official Believed (John 4)	20
June 14	Session 2 The Hometown Rejected (Luke 4)	30
June 21	Session 3 The Crowd Amazed (Mark 1)	40
June 28	Session 4 The Leper Proclaimed (Mark 1)	52

UNIT 23: THE WAY OF JESUS

	Memory Verses	63
July 5	Session 1 Faith and Forgiveness (Mark 2)	64
July 12	Session 2 Healing and Calling (Mark 3)	74
July 19	Session 3 Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12)	86
July 26	Session 4 Lord of Love (Luke 6)	96

UNIT 24: THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

	Memory Verses	107
Aug. 2	Session 1 He Is the Messiah (Matthew 11)	108
Aug. 9	Session 2 He Resurrects Life (Luke 7)	118
Aug. 16	Session 3 He Forgives Sin (Luke 7)	130
Aug. 23	Session 4 He Teaches on Prayer (Luke 11)	140
Aug. 30	Session 5 He Teaches on Worry (Luke 12)	150

THE EDITOR

Jesus, there is no one like Him. He graced the paths of Israel two thousand years ago, and He graces the pages of our Bibles today. But even better, He graces us with His presence in our hearts.

If you have been a Christian for many years, it might be easy to read the stories of Jesus in this volume with pride, thinking you already know these passages. But I pray that the Spirit would enlighten your mind and revive your heart to see something new or learn something different about who Jesus is—His heart, His character, His purpose. There is much that we already know about Him, but being God, there is still much for us to learn.

Like the crowds, let us be in awe as if seeing Him heal or cast out demons for the first time. But even more, let us be like Peter's mother-in-law, who served Jesus after being healed. Or like the man with leprosy who proclaimed about Him because of his joy. Or the friends of the man with paralysis who brought him to Jesus knowing He could do anything. Or like the disciples who obeyed when He called. Or the woman who was a sinner who gave Jesus her all.

There is something to learn from all these people who were changed because they encountered Jesus. This should make us reflect on our story of our encounter with Jesus. Whether we have chosen to trust in Him or not, our encounter with Jesus will forever change us. If you have not placed your faith in Him, know that He beckons to you now. Choosing to follow Jesus will change your trajectory. He did that for the people in these passages, and He continues to do that in people's lives today.

Y Bonesteele

Team Leader

The Gospel Project for Adults



Scan this QR code to **PROVIDE FEEDBACK** of your experience with The Gospel Project for Adults materials.

The Gospel Project®
Adult Leader Guide
Summer 2026
Volume 2, Number 4

Y Bonesteele
Team Leader

Daniel Davis
Content Editor

Rachel Myrick
Content and Production Editor

Darin Clark
Design Team Leader

Chad Hunter
Graphic Designer

T. J. Norris
Contributing Illustrator

Dwayne McCrary
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

John Paul Basham
Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments by email to TGP.adults@Lifeway.com or mail to Team Leader, The Gospel Project: Adult Leader Guide, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707.

Printed in the United States of America

The Gospel Project®: Adult Leader Guide (ISSN 2163-0917; Item 005438061) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707. © 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the publisher.

No part of this work may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems.

For ordering or inquiries including Autoship, visit Lifeway.com, call 1.800.458.2772, write Lifeway Resources Customer Service, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, or fax 615.251.5933. For address changes, email subscribe@Lifeway.com. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, visit Lifeway.com/Autoship, email orderentry@Lifeway.com, or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review Lifeway's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.Lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

THE WRITERS

PERSONAL PREPARATION

Caleb Boss

(Unit 22, Sessions 1-4)

Caleb is the student pastor at New Oak Grove Baptist Church in Alachua, Florida. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have three children: David, Emily, and Henry. Caleb is an MDiv graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Allyson M. Howell

(Unit 24, Sessions 1-5)

Allyson is the Communications Director for a non-profit organization and is currently pursuing a PhD in Historical Theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She has served in local churches through women's ministry, worship ministry, writing, and editorial work. Allyson lives in Nashville with her husband, Randy.

Daniel Youngblood

(Unit 23, Sessions 1-4)

Daniel is a middle school Bible teacher at Christ Covenant School in Ridgeland, Mississippi, and a member of Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, Mississippi. He and his wife, Isabella, married in August 2025. Daniel is pursuing a PhD at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and looks forward to a lifetime of teaching God's Word to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

GROUP EXPERIENCE

Jim Gantenbein

(Unit 23, Sessions 1-4)

Jim is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He retired from full-time ministry in 2022 after more than thirty-one years and over sixteen years as a Senior Pastor. Jim and Cathy have been married over fifty-one years and live in Port Orchard, Washington.

Lexie Hood

(Unit 22, Sessions 1-4)

Lexie received her teaching certification from Stephen F. Austin State University. She received her MA in Christian Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She resides in East Texas with her husband and young son. A former Preschool and Children's Minister, she stays at home while serving with the kids team of the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention.

Jaclyn Mains

(Unit 24, Sessions 1-5)

Jaclyn is a Bible teacher who serves with the International Mission Board, creating training resources. She holds an MA in Religion from Liberty University and has served in women's ministry. With her husband, she's raising their son, Judah, to love and follow Jesus.

BEING A TRELLIS FOR A NEW GROUP

By G. Dwayne McCrary



Growing tomatoes is easy, they said. All you need is some sunlight, soil, and water. No one shared the necessity for spacing, a trellis or stakes, and adding fertilizer. The plants needed more care and support than I anticipated. The challenge was real, but with the support and knowledge of others, our tomatoes survived and eventually flourished.

The same can be true of starting a new group. The process may sound simple, but the challenges are real. Facing a room with only you and one other person can be discouraging. Trying to connect with people who seem to have forgotten how to answer their cell phones can feel personal. Attendees who are present one week and gone for the next two also can contribute to the discouragement of starting a new group. Leaders of established groups can help the leaders of new groups survive and thrive in five ways:

- 1. Mentor.** Just as I needed the expertise of successful tomato gardeners, leaders of new groups also need expertise. Experienced leaders can walk alongside new leaders and help them fine-tune how they prepare, offer tips for reaching out to potential group participants, and share how they overcame some of the challenges new leaders face. One important thing to remember is that they also may notice our less-than-stellar habits, so we want to make sure we are setting a good example.
- 2. Adopt.** Supplying a new gardener with items like a tomato cage and preferred plant foods is a way to ensure a new gardener gets a good start. We can provide new groups with the tools they need to succeed. An established



We can pray for eyes to see the need and courage
to address it in the way He directs, seeking His heart
and direction, and acting on His answer.

group can offer a new group a fresh set of dry-erase markers, nametags, and other items they find helpful. We can even present these items to a new leader a couple of weeks before they start their new group, also inviting them to share about their journey in starting their new group.

3. **Praise.** As a novice tomato gardener, having a pro point out what I'm doing right can make a big difference. Affirmation goes a long way for new group leaders as they seek to reach people who aren't part of a Bible study group. We can encourage them when they do the right things, knowing their faithfulness will be honored in time.
4. **Celebrate.** The excitement of the first tomato is worth sharing and celebrating. So too is a new group. We can celebrate the start of a new group. We can applaud the growth of the group and the new people who are participating in Bible study. We can celebrate as new groups reach people our current groups have been unable to reach.
5. **Pray.** Regardless of how much experience a tomato grower has, some things are beyond their control—weather, pests, diseases, and so on. The same is true with new and established groups. Some things can only be addressed with prayer. We can lead our established group to pray for the new group, encouraging the leaders with our prayers. In some cases, a new leader just needs to know that someone is praying for them. We can be those people.

The group that gave birth to the new group needs prayer as well. The vacuum left by those who moved to the new group will open the door for new opportunities and growth. We also can lead our groups to ask God to help us determine when we need to help start a new group. God may tell us to support other groups who are starting new groups, or He may reveal that we need to start a new Bible study group. Our responsibility is to ask God rather than decide for Him. We can pray for eyes to see the need and courage to address it in the way He directs, seeking His heart and direction, and acting on His answer.

These five actions—mentoring, adopting, praising, celebrating, and praying—serve as a trellis for a new group and provide the support needed so they can be fruitful.

G. Dwayne McCrary is the manager of the adult ongoing Bible study team at Lifeway.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The Gospel Project for Adults aspires to point to the gospel of Jesus Christ through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources that show how God's plan of redemption unfolds throughout all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. This curriculum provides theological yet practical studies that immerse your group in the **STORY** of the gospel, helping to develop a gospel **CULTURE** that leads to gospel **MISSION**.

GOSPEL STORY

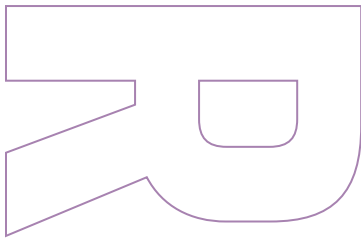
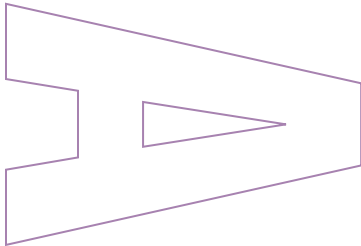
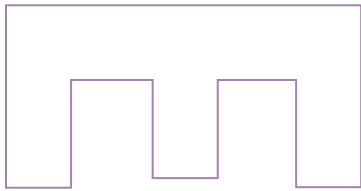
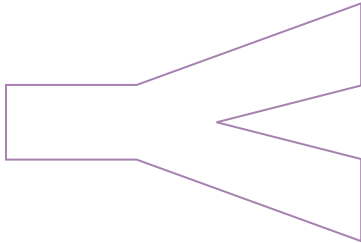
Our aim is to help people see the storyline of Scripture, the thread from the beginning to end, that weaves God's plan to rescue and redeem His creation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL CULTURE

Our hope is that the message of the gospel saturates our understanding of Christ, increasing our joy in Him, helping doubters become believers who become declarers of the gospel.

GOSPEL MISSION

Our desire is to empower believers to live on mission, declaring the good news of the gospel in word and deed for God's glory and the growth of His kingdom.



VOL 01:
CREATION AND COVENANT

(Genesis; Job)

Fall 2024

Unit 01: Foundations

Unit 02: God's Promises

Unit 03: Struggles of Faith

VOL 02:
LAW AND LIFE

(Exodus–Deuteronomy)

Winter 2024–25

Unit 04: God's Miraculous Work

Unit 05: God's Character

Unit 06: Humanity's Selfishness

VOL 03:
LAND AND LOSS

(Joshua–1 Samuel)

Spring 2025

Unit 07: God Is for His People

Unit 08: God Delivers His People

Unit 09: God Cares for His People

VOL 04:
FOOLISHNESS AND WISDOM

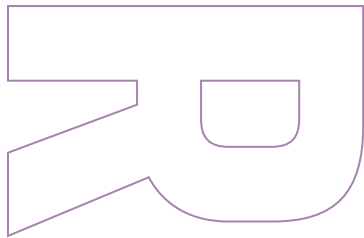
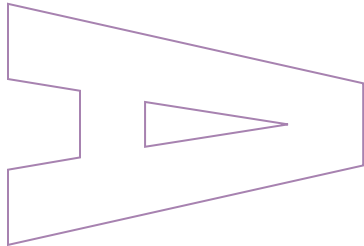
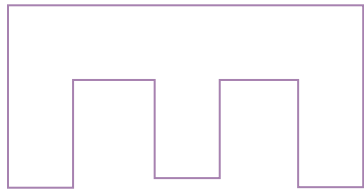
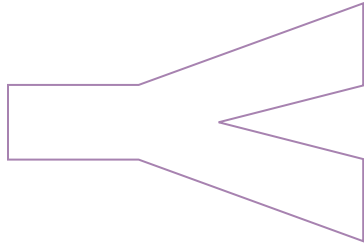
(1 Samuel–1 Kings; Wisdom Literature)

Summer 2025

Unit 10: The Foolishness of God's People

Unit 11: Everything Belongs to the Lord

Unit 12: The Need for Wisdom



VOL 05:
DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

(1 Kings–2 Chronicles; The Prophets)

Fall 2025

Unit 13: Divisions

Unit 14: Renewal

Unit 15: Decline

VOL 06:
PROPHETS AND PROVISION

(The Prophets; Ezra–Esther)

Winter 2025–26

Unit 16: God in the Exile

Unit 17: God in the Restoration

Unit 18: God in the Return

VOL 07:
THE SON HAS COME

(The Gospels)

Spring 2026

Unit 19: The Arrival

Unit 20: The Preparation

Unit 21: The Ministry

VOL 08:
THE SON HAS AUTHORITY

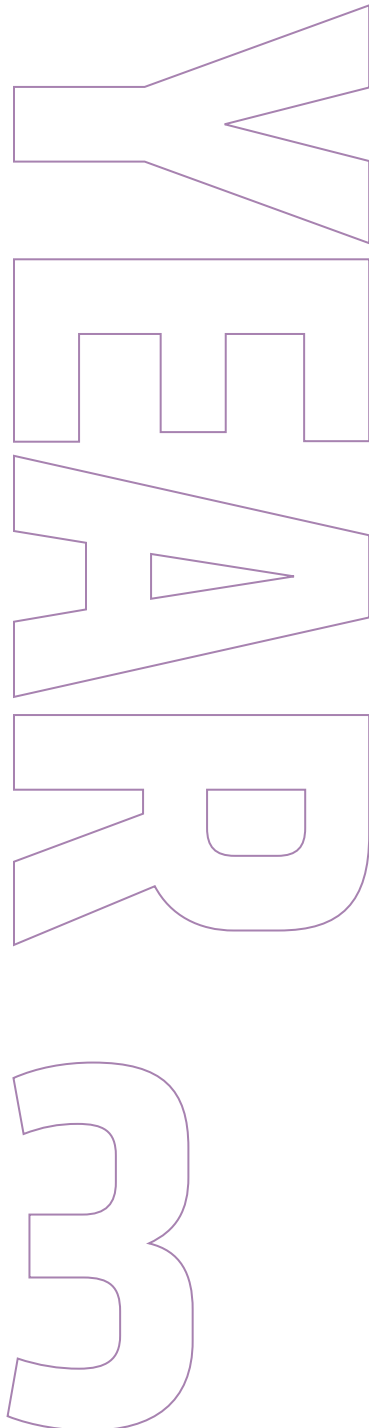
(The Gospels)

Summer 2026

Unit 22: Responses to Jesus

Unit 23: The Way of Jesus

Unit 24: The Teachings of Jesus



VOL 09:
THE SON HAS TRUTH

(The Gospels)

Fall 2026

Unit 25: The Truth of His Power

Unit 26: The Truth of His Actions

Unit 27: The Truth of His Kingdom

VOL 10:
THE SON HAS RISEN

(The Gospels; Acts)

Winter 2026–27

Unit 28: The Final Days

Unit 29: Post-Resurrection

Unit 30: The Gospel Spreads

VOL 11:
THE CHURCH HAS A MISSION

(Acts; The Epistles)

Spring 2027

Unit 31: Sharing Truths of the Mission

Unit 32: Living Out the Mission

Unit 33: Christ Focuses Our Mission

VOL 12:
THE CHURCH HAS A FUTURE

(The Epistles; Revelation)

Summer 2027

Unit 34: We Are in Christ

Unit 35: We Are Citizens of Heaven

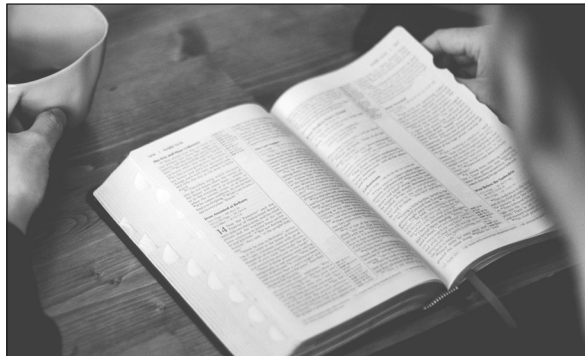
Unit 36: Jesus

HOW TO USE THE LEADER GUIDE

The Leader Guide is an important tool in your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:

1) READ THE WORD DAILY

Begin each week by reading the Scriptures according to the Daily Readings. These Bible readings will help you mentally and spiritually prepare for the group experience each week while also building healthy Bible study habits for personal growth. The daily readings will help you understand the context of the Bible story for each week's session and fill in the gaps between sessions. The weekly psalm reading will help you think worshipfully and prayerfully about the story's place in the greater redemptive narrative of the Bible. And the timeline will give you a visual perspective so you can place the Bible story in the larger context of the Bible's storyline.



- **Daily Readings**
- **Chronological Timeline**

TIMELINE

Jesus Performs His First Miracle at the Wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11)

Nicodemus Visits Jesus at Night (John 3:1-21)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Performs His Second Miracle in Cana (John 4:46-54)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple (John 2:13-22)

Jesus Speaks with a Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-42)

Jesus Is Rejected in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30)

Daily Readings

Day 1: John 4:43-54 Day 4: John 6:1-21

Day 2: John 5:1-23 Day 5: John 6:22-71

Day 3: John 5:24-47 Day 6: Psalm 142

Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

21

2) STUDY FOR PERSONAL PREPARATION

The Personal Preparation section contains the Scripture passages that will guide you and your group to prepare for Bible study during the week before group time begins. A Bible study prompt will help you engage with the Scripture passage, but encourage your group to do more than what's asked in the prompt. Space is provided for you and your group to add notes and questions and markings that will help you study the passage more deeply and see any nuances about the words and phrases of the Scripture provided. In addition to a brief commentary with thought-provoking questions to help you and your group dig deeper into the text, leader notes will provide you with additional nuggets for understanding the Scriptures. Use this Personal Preparation to experience what your group is experiencing as they study the week prior. Consider what questions, thoughts, or challenges they might have while engaging with the Scripture passages.

- Scripture
- Commentary
- Questions

PERSONAL PREPARATION

Notes

JESUS'S WORD IS POWERFUL AND ABLE TO HEAL
(JOHN 4:46-50)

Highlight words that depict the official's state of mind when he approached Jesus.

46 He went again to Cana of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a certain royal official whose son was ill at Capernaum.
47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to him and pleaded with him to come down and heal his son, since he was about to die. 48 Jesus told him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." 49 "Sir," the official said to him, "come down before my boy dies." 50 "Go," Jesus told him, "your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and departed.

Jesus returned to Cana of Galilee and was quickly approached by an official who was distraught over his son's condition. His son was dying and needed more than what a physician could offer. He approached Jesus with the expectation that Jesus would come with him to heal his son. In the same way that this official expected Jesus to come with him, we too have the tendency to come to God with preconceived expectations. Our downfall as broken people is to plead with God for what we think we need when we think we need it rather than trusting that God is faithful to our needs. Instead of anxiously expecting signs from God to work out our circumstances the way we want them to be handled, we must trust in His promises found in His Word.

LEADER NOTE: It is important to approach prayer with a heart of expectancy, eagerly awaiting God to work. His desire is for us to come before Him in confidence and to cast our burdens upon Him (Ps. 55:22; Phil. 3:6). Anxious, preconceived expectations happen when we ask God to work out our circumstances our way rather than trusting that God's authority and power are greater than our circumstances. Genuine faith exists in the heart of man when he gives up his burdens and relies solely upon the Lord.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

FAITH: Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Key Concept: Faith includes believing in Jesus's authority and power.

Notes

In what ways have you had anxious expectations in your requests from the Lord?

Though the official may have thought his request would be received with urgency, Jesus unexpectedly responded, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe" (John 4:48). It is so easy to become entranced with the miracles rather than who the miracles point to. In this moment, Jesus taught us that He is the source of authority and power. The official believed that Jesus was able to heal his son as long as Jesus came to his house. Maybe he felt Jesus had to touch his son for the healing to happen. But Jesus, to demonstrate His authority and compassion for the official, said that his son would be healed roughly twenty-five miles away. Then the official, in faith, departed.

Often times God does not work in the way we think He ought to. He alone is sovereign, and our requests are not. Faith in His authority, power, and grace is what He desires from us.

LEADER NOTE: Pay special attention to two parts of Jesus's exchange with the official. First, Jesus made a point to show us that true faith does not occur solely based on signs and wonders. Faith is total trust in Him, even without the signs and wonders. Second, even though the official continued to plead with his anxious expectation, Jesus demonstrated compassion. Out of His compassion, Jesus demonstrated His power and authority with an act of grace. The same is true for us. Out of Christ's same heart of compassion, we were shown the ultimate act of grace and forgiveness by His death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

How does the reality of Jesus's authority and power affect how you approach Him in prayer?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"It often happens that while our Heavenly Father may not grant our desires in every particular, he nevertheless helps us in unexpected ways, so that we may learn not to dictate to him in anything."¹

-John Calvin (1509-1564)

22 Unit 22 | Session 1 | The Official Believed

23

3) DIRECT THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

The Group Experience for each session includes an activity and interactive questions designed to be used in the group context to engage your group in active learning. The personal prep you and your group put into the days leading up to your group time will provide a richer discussion and more thoughtful theological applications to mutually encourage each other during your group time. The first page of the Group Experience will help you engage your group members as they arrive. Dialogue suggestions describe the context, transitions, and a recap of Bible readings or previous sessions to remind your group of what has already been studied or give a framework for where the lesson is heading. The second page gives a visual representation of the activity from the Personal Study Guide. A teaching outline helps guide your members through the activity and the debrief discussion.

Key Concept: Faith includes believing in Jesus's authority and power.

GROUP ACTIVITY

CHART: Direct your group to page 22 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart titled "Healing and Response." Recreate this chart on a board in your room so you can record the group's responses.

Notes

Healing and Response
Read the Bible passages below. Compare them by writing down the nature of the healing that Jesus performed and the people's responses.

	HEALING	RESPONSE TO THE HEALING
Mark 1:29-31		
Matthew 8:5-13		
Matthew 9:27-30		
John 4:46-54		

READ: Invite volunteers to read aloud each of the accounts listed on the chart.

INSTRUCT: Divide the large group into four smaller groups. Assign each group a different Scripture passage and instruct them to complete the information on their row on the chart. After a couple of minutes, recall the groups and ask a spokesperson from each group to provide that information. Record the groups' conclusions in the chart on the board, encouraging participants to record these in their PSGs as well.

DISCUSS: What were the similarities in these accounts from Scripture? (Jesus performed the healing out of compassion.) What were some differences? (Some asked for healing/others Jesus approached, Jesus touched some/others He healed from a distance) How did the people respond to these healings? (Some responded with faith, but the Pharisees responded with criticism.)

SAY: Jesus is fully God and fully man. He was acquainted with the physical ailments that so often plague our world. He knew pain and He knew suffering.

27



- Group Activity
- Interactive Questions
- Theological Applications

4) TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

After the recap of the activity, help your group take the next steps with the day's Scripture lesson by walking them through the Head, Heart, and Hands applications. Invite volunteers to share and discuss answers to the questions for their mutual benefit. Then take prayer requests and praises as you wrap up your group time. Space is provided to jot those down in your guide for prayer during the following week. And finally, guide your group to read and pray through the designated psalm, focusing your thoughts and words once more upon God's Word as you conclude the session.

Key Concept: Faith includes believing in Jesus's authority and power.

HANDS: God has called us to be a witness in how we live and by the conversations we have with others. Jesus's identity as Savior and His authority as the Son of God are found in His Word, and He left His followers on earth to proclaim His name. His name must be proclaimed, for He is the only way to salvation from sin and death.

How can you be a faithful witness who proclaims Christ's authority, identity, and grace to others this week?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Read Revelation 21-22 and observe how the Lord will undo all the ramifications that sin brought into the world. As you read, thank the Lord for how He has delivered believers from sin and for the hope that awaits us.
- Reflect on your life. Jesus's divine authority demands a response. Journal about some areas in your life in which God is calling you to walk in faith.
- Think of someone who is having a crisis of faith right now. Find a practical way that you can minister to their needs, and encourage them to continue their journey in faith.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 23 in their PSC so they can pray for others throughout the week.


PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 142:5-7 with your group. Thank God that we can come to Him with our hurts and pains, knowing He is compassionate to us.

References
1. John Calvin, John, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Ephesus, IL: Crossway Books, 1964), 26-455.
2. MacLaren of Manchester, quoted in R. Scott Hughes, John: The Holy Bible, Preaching the Word (Ephesus, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 145.

Notes



- Application Questions
- Scripture-Based Prayer
- Prayer Requests

THE SON HAS AUTHORITY

By Caleb Boss



Authority is a concept with which most humans have a love-hate relationship. On one hand, authority intrigues us, especially when it comes to our desire for power. On the other hand, as fallen creations, we do not like the idea of submitting to someone else's authority. It's in our nature. You see, our sin obscures the true essence of authority. True authority is not something we can obtain for selfish gain, but it is wielded by God, who is our loving Creator. Our sin separates us from God, and God, who is holy and righteous, is fully just in demanding repayment for our sin. That repayment is not anything you or I could offer, so God is within His rights to demand the only payment that fits the debt we owe—eternal death for we who are bound in our sin. Yet God didn't leave us hopeless in our sin. Instead of wielding His authority to condemn, He used His authority to offer redemption for our sin. What a beautiful display of grace with His boundless authority!

In this volume, we will see many accounts of Scripture in which Jesus proved Himself to be the long-awaited Messiah and Son of God. We also will see that Jesus's identity as the Son of God grants Him authority over all things. Let's take a quick bird's-eye view together to see how we should understand that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has been granted authority over all things from the Father.

THE SON

Jesus showed a multitude of signs that pointed to His identity as the Son of God. Throughout this volume, we'll see that Jesus performed many miraculous signs, such as healings and casting out demons (Mark 1:21-45; John 4:46-54). He also fulfilled Old Testament prophecy by proclaiming good news to the poor and declaring the coming of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:16-30). He even publicly forgave sins (Mark 2:1-12). Jesus's own people rejected His claims and called Him a blasphemer because they believed God is the only One who can forgive sins. In this they were correct, but what Jesus's own people rejected out of spiritual blindness, we recognize explicitly: Jesus is in fact the Son of God! He Himself is the fulfillment of the law, and He demonstrated His divine nature by performing miracles only God could do.

Jesus's authority
is not heavy-handed;
it is a blessing to
His people.

The things Jesus did and said all point to His identity as the Son of God.

As a New Testament Christian, I am reminded of what John, an eyewitness and Jesus's beloved disciple, said in his Gospel account:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31).

What an incredible claim and promise! The things Jesus did and said all point to His identity as the Son of God. I hope you are encouraged to see His identity revealed as you dive into each account of Jesus's ministry recorded in this volume.

THE SON HAS AUTHORITY

Jesus's identity as the Son of God points us to His authority. While it is true that the Son of God is our Messiah, it is also equally true that He is our Lord. Jesus was, and is, a man of flesh and blood, and He is also fully divine. His divinity means lordship. He has authority over all things, for Jesus Himself said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). In each Bible story in this volume, we will see Jesus's authority carried out. He demonstrated His authority over creation, which is fitting because we are told in Scripture that all things were made by Him (Col. 1:16). When desperate people came to Him, He healed every sickness and disease. He cast out demons, and the demons had no choice but to obey His commands. Unlike our fallen desires to use authority for our own selfish gain, Jesus used His authority to display His glory and to extend

His gracious hand out of love for others. Jesus's authority is not heavy-handed; it is a blessing to His people. He demonstrated authority over His creation ultimately to show us that He has authority even over sin and death itself. Jesus alone is the Lord of life, and by faith in His grace alone are we saved.

As we read through this volume, understand that Jesus's authority over creation is but a small glimpse of the authority He has to grant salvation to the lost. His identity and authority put on display as the Son of God ultimately led Jesus to die on the cross and rise from the grave on the third day. He has defeated death, and He is still saving people from sin that would lead them to eternal death. What a blessing to see with eyes wide open the authority and victory that the Son of God has over our sin.

Caleb Boss is the student pastor at New Oak Grove Baptist Church in Alachua, Florida. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have three children: David, Emily, and Henry. Caleb is an MDiv graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 22

RESPONSES

TO JESUS



MARK; LUKE; JOHN



MEMORY VERSES

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

—Luke 4:18-19



THE OFFICIAL BELIEVED

CORE PASSAGE: JOHN 4:46-54

CONTEXT

After Jesus met with the woman at the well in Samaria, she believed Jesus was the Messiah and told the people in her town. Many people in Samaria believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Two days later, Jesus resumed His travels in Galilee. While in Cana, He was stopped by an official who was in great distress because his son was at death's door. Yet his son was in Capernaum, roughly twenty-five miles away. Jesus revealed His authority over sickness in a way that showed His messiahship.

KEY CONCEPT

Faith includes believing in Jesus's authority and power.

As you examine John 4:46-54:

- Reflect that Jesus is compassionate even when people look for signs to believe.
- Emphasize that faith is believing without seeing, but seeing leads to deeper faith.



Scan this QR code to **PROVIDE FEEDBACK** of your experience with The Gospel Project for Adults materials.



TIMELINE

Jesus Performs His First
Miracle at the Wedding
in Cana (John 2:1-12)

Nicodemus Visits Jesus at Night
(John 3:1-21)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Performs His Second
Miracle in Cana (John 4:46-54)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple
(John 2:13-22)

Jesus Speaks with a Samaritan
Woman (John 4:1-42)

Jesus Is Rejected in Nazareth
(Luke 4:16-30)



Daily Readings

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: John 4:43-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: John 6:1-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: John 5:1-23 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: John 6:22-71 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: John 5:24-47 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 142 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

JESUS'S WORD IS POWERFUL AND ABLE TO HEAL

(JOHN 4:46-50).

Highlight words that depict the official's state of mind when he approached Jesus.

46 He went again to Cana of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a certain royal official whose son was ill at Capernaum.

47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to him and pleaded with him to come down and heal his son, since he was about to die. **48** Jesus told him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." **49** "Sir," the official said to him, "come down before my boy dies." **50** "Go," Jesus told him, "your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and departed.

Jesus returned to Cana of Galilee and was quickly approached by an official who was distraught over his son's condition. His son was dying and needed more than what a physician could offer. He approached Jesus with the expectation that Jesus would come with him to heal his son. In the same way that this official expected Jesus to come with him, we too have the tendency to come to God with preconceived expectations. Our downfall as broken people is to plead with God for what we think we need when we think we need it rather than trusting that God is faithful to our needs. Instead of anxiously expecting signs from God to work out our circumstances the way we want them to be handled, we must trust in His promises found in His Word.

LEADER NOTE: It is important to approach prayer with a heart of expectancy, eagerly awaiting God to work. His desire is for us to come before Him in confidence and to cast our burdens upon Him (Ps. 55:22; Phil. 3:6). Anxious, preconceived expectations happen when we ask God to work out our circumstances our way rather than trusting that God's authority and power are greater than our circumstances. Genuine faith exists in the heart of man when he gives up his burdens and relies solely upon the Lord.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

FAITH: Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

In what ways have you had anxious expectations in your requests from the Lord?

Though the official may have thought his request would be received with urgency, Jesus unexpectedly responded, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe" (John 4:48). It is so easy to become entranced with the miracles rather than who the miracles point to. In this moment, Jesus taught us that He is the source of authority and power. The official believed that Jesus was able to heal his son as long as Jesus came to his house. Maybe he felt Jesus had to touch his son for the healing to happen. But Jesus, to demonstrate His authority and compassion for the official, said that his son would be healed roughly twenty-five miles away. Then the official, in faith, departed.

Often times God does not work in the way we think He ought to. He alone is sovereign, and our requests are not. Faith in His authority, power, and grace is what He desires from us.

LEADER NOTE: Pay special attention to two parts of Jesus's exchange with the official. First, Jesus made a point to show us that true faith does not occur solely based on signs and wonders. Faith is total trust in Him, even without the signs and wonders. Second, even though the official continued to plead with his anxious expectation, Jesus demonstrated compassion. Out of His compassion, Jesus demonstrated His power and authority with an act of grace. The same is true for us. Out of Christ's same heart of compassion, we were shown the ultimate act of grace and forgiveness by His death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

How does the reality of Jesus's authority and power affect how you approach Him in prayer?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"It often happens that while our Heavenly Father may not grant our desires in every particular, he nevertheless helps us in unexpected ways, so that we may learn not to dictate to him in anything."¹

—John Calvin (1509–1564)

JESUS'S POWER AND AUTHORITY REALIZED LEADS TO FAITH (JOHN 4:51-54).

Underline the father's reaction to his son's healing and the effects that Jesus's grace had on his entire family.

51 While he was still going down, his servants met him saying that his boy was alive. **52** He asked them at what time he got better. "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him," they answered. **53** The father realized this was the very hour at which Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." So he himself believed, along with his whole household. **54** Now this was also the second sign Jesus performed after he came from Judea to Galilee.

Before the official even reached his house, his servants met him with wonderful news—his son was now well! Jesus's compassion for the official was proven faithful. Although this father had not seen his son's healing, his servants' report led his mind back to what Jesus had said, even noting the time Jesus said it. Though we may not initially see God at work in our circumstances, when He does prove Himself faithful, His faithfulness should lead us to deeper faith. The official remembered what Christ had said, and Christ was proven to have healed the boy as He said He would. At times we may display weak faith or a lack of trust in God due to our expectations, yet His grace is sufficient at the right time to solidify our trust in Him alone.

LEADER NOTE: It is not wrong to believe as a result of God's faithfulness. Many of us may have a greater tendency than others to need tangible proof before belief. One of Jesus's own disciples, Thomas, needed to see and touch the scars in His hands and side before believing that He had in fact risen from the dead (John 20:25). It's one thing to doubt and then be joyously proven wrong by God's faithfulness. It's another issue entirely to only trust in the signs rather than the God who faithfully displays acts of grace.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

✕ ————— ✕

"The way to increase faith is to exercise faith. And the true parent of perfect faith is the experience of the blessings that come from the crudest, rudest, narrowest, blindest, feeblest faith that a man can exercise."²

—MacLaren of Manchester (1826–1910)

Key Concept: Faith includes believing in Jesus's authority and power.

Notes

Why do you think we feel we need to see to believe? How has God shown you grace to deepen your faith in Him?

The official and his entire household believed because of Jesus's compassion. You see, Christ's selfless love and His authority affect people. His faithfulness unto death on a cross gives us hope to believe that there is salvation from sin and restoration with God. We share the same faith as the official and his household. Although we have not seen Jesus face to face or witnessed His miracles, we do not have a blind faith. We have God's inerrant Word. We have the historical accuracy of His Word. We see the effects of salvation by the Holy Spirit upon the lives of believers. If you are a believer in Christ, you are evidence of Christ's continued work and are called to be a witness to those who do not yet believe.

LEADER NOTE: It's important to emphasize that Jesus's intentions after His ascension into heaven were for His followers to bear witness about Him. His apostles were the evidence to show people the mighty works and authority of Christ. The book of Acts is a reminder of the transformation we experience by placing our faith in Jesus. The apostle Paul, in particular, was completely transformed by faith so that he became the greatest missionary in the church, writing half the books of the New Testament and championing the life, ministry, and authority of Jesus Christ.

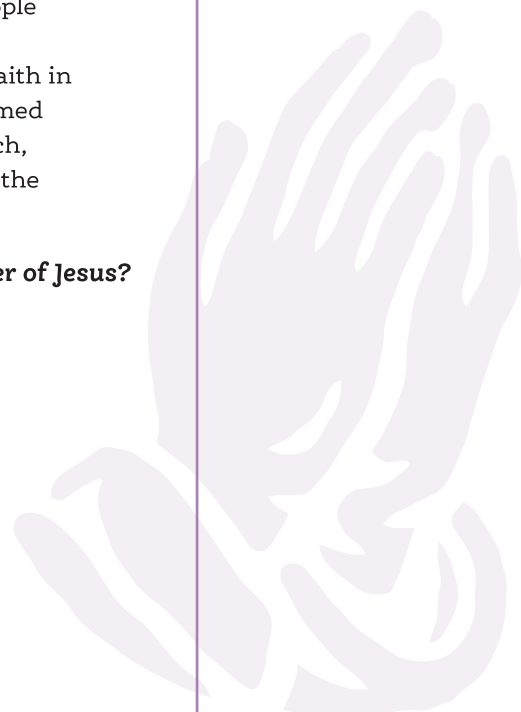
In what ways does your life bear witness to the authority and power of Jesus?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

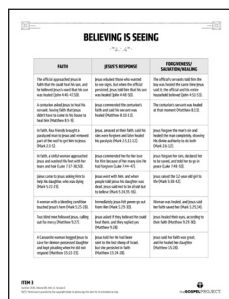
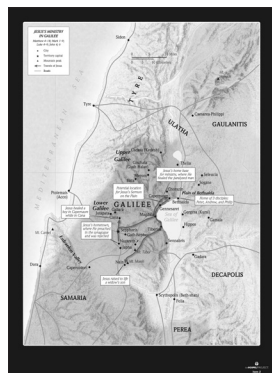
x

x

Jesus's power to heal from afar points to His authority over all. That authority reveals itself in His victory over sin and death through His crucifixion and resurrection. We merely need to have faith in Him.



Notes



ARRIVAL

ENGAGE: As people arrive for the group experience, begin by asking this ice-breaker question: “What are some cultural things in which we put our faith in this world?” (Some examples may include a sports team, a pastor, political figure, community services such as the police department, etc.)

CONTEXT

SAY: This passage in John 4 tells of an official who believed in Jesus because of Jesus showing His divine authority. Jesus had previously come to this location and performed a miracle by turning water into wine. (Highlight the town of Cana on **Pacl’ Item 2: Jesus’s Ministry in Galilee Map.**) As He returned to this location, He once again proved His divinity through the supernatural healing of the official’s son.

TRANSITION: Today’s account in John 4 not only proves Jesus’s ability to heal physical ailments but also proves His ability to heal spiritually. The official’s son needed physical healing, but the official needed spiritual healing. Our faith is often built through stories and testimonies of God’s healing, provision, protection, and faithfulness.

RECAP

ASK: What stood out to you this week, either about the official’s actions or about Jesus’s actions?

ENGAGE: Pass out copies of **Pacl’ Item 3: Believing Is Seeing** and briefly talk about the crowds’ desire to see signs and Jesus’s rebuke of that perspective. Say: “As we study this passage of Scripture, it is important to remember that God is still good, still faithful, and still sovereign even if the outcome of our prayer is not what we think it should be. The Lord would still be good, holy, and worthy of our worship even if He did not heal the official’s son.”

TRANSITION: Throughout Scripture, we see many moments in which Jesus exhibited His divine authority to heal the sick. Let’s read through a few of these moments together to identify the nature of the need that was met, the outcome of the healings, both physically and spiritually, and people’s responses to the healings.



Listen to session-by-session training every week on
 Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, or Spotify
ministrygrid.com/gospelproject · gospelproject.com/leader-training.

Key Concept: Faith includes believing in Jesus's authority and power.

Notes

GROUP ACTIVITY

CHART: Direct your group to page 22 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart titled "Healing and Response." Recreate this chart on a board in your room so you can record the group's responses.

Healing and Response		
Read the Bible passages below. Compare them by writing down the nature of the healing that Jesus performed and the people's responses.		
	HEALING	RESPONSE TO THE HEALING
Mark 1:29-31		
Matthew 8:5-13		
Matthew 9:27-30		
John 4:46-54		

READ: Invite volunteers to read aloud each of the accounts listed on the chart.

INSTRUCT: Divide the large group into four smaller groups. Assign each group a different Scripture passage and instruct them to complete the information on their row on the chart. After a couple of minutes, recall the groups and ask a spokesperson from each group to provide that information. Record the groups' conclusions in the chart on the board, encouraging participants to record these in their PSGs as well.

DISCUSS: What were the similarities in these accounts from Scripture? (*Jesus performed the healing out of compassion.*) What were some differences? (*Some asked for healing/others Jesus approached; Jesus touched some/others He healed from a distance*) How did the people respond to these healings? (*Some responded with faith, but the Pharisees responded with criticism.*)

SAY: Jesus is fully God and fully man. He was acquainted with the physical ailments that so often plague our world. He knew pain and He knew suffering.

Yet because He is fully God, He holds the power to heal both our physical and spiritual needs. When we experience Jesus's divinity and authority, it always demands a response of faith: Will we choose to trust Jesus with our lives and our needs or will we try to control the outcome in our own strength?

DEBRIEF

How does Jesus's authority to heal shape the way we view illnesses and sin?

How does Jesus's familiarity with pain and suffering lead us to a greater faith in Him?

SUMMARIZE

John 4:51 tells us that the official took Jesus at His word. Today, we have something the man did not have: the full canon of Scripture. We have story after story of Jesus healing both physically and spiritually. We have the full understanding that through Jesus's death and resurrection, we have hope beyond our current circumstances. There will always be sickness this side of heaven, but Jesus holds the authority to heal all sickness. Even when He chooses not to heal in the way we expect, He is still sovereign and good. Our faith is built on the hope of the resurrection to come.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 23). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Head** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: Some people go through the accounts of Jesus's miracles and think about how amazing it would have been to see such wonders. Although it would have been amazing to experience, it is important to understand that the purpose of Jesus's miracles was to show the people that He had authority as the Son of God. Although the miracles are exciting, they had an important purpose: to point us to Christ.

How do the accounts of Jesus's ministry draw you closer to Him?



HEART: Sometimes the anxiety of our hearts can get the better of us. We know the right response is to trust in God fully, but sometimes that is easier said than done. Amid our doubts or our anxious expectations, it is important to seek God first for who He is rather than what He can do for us. Part of salvation is surrendering our hearts to the Lord. He is faithful even when we cannot see it.

In what ways can you cast your burdens upon the Lord?



HANDS: God has called us to be a witness in how we live and by the conversations we have with others. Jesus's identity as Savior and His authority as the Son of God are found in His Word, and He left His followers on earth to proclaim His name. His name must be proclaimed, for He is the only way to salvation from sin and death.

How can you be a faithful witness who proclaims Christ's authority, identity, and grace to others this week?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Read Revelation 21–22 and observe how the Lord will undo all the ramifications that sin brought into the world. As you read, thank the Lord for how He has delivered believers from sin and for the hope that awaits us.
- Reflect on your life. Jesus's divine authority demands a response. Journal about some areas in your life in which God is calling you to walk in faith.
- Think of someone who is having a crisis of faith right now. Find a practical way that you can minister to their needs, and encourage them to continue their journey in faith.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 23 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 142:5-7 with your group. Thank God that we can come to Him with our hurts and pains, knowing He is compassionate to us.

References

1. John Calvin, John, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), Jn 4:50.
2. MacLaren of Manchester, quoted in R. Kent Hughes, John: That You May Believe, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 143.