

## An Important Message to Devotion Leaders

It is our prayer that as the students and leaders of your group grow spiritually through service and Bible study this week, your relationships will grow closer and your group dynamics will be enhanced. These are the goals behind creating these devotional and discussion questions. (There are no right or wrong answers.)

Please keep in mind this is only a guide. It is neither a curriculum to be chained to, nor material that is merely read to students. As a leader, *you* know your group and their needs better than we do. Please make changes and additions to suit the needs of your group.

The theme this year is "**Strong in the Storm.**" Each day will be a study with that focus.

May our Heavenly Father bless you and your group as you seek to know Him more.



## Bible Study and Prayer

1. When you think about relationships or friendship, what is the first thing that comes to mind?
2. Read Psalms 119:1-14
3. How is what you read in this passage similar to a relationship or friendships?
4. When you think of doing a Bible study, reading God's Word and praying, you don't think of friendships or relationships, but you should. When thinking about what a friendship is, you start to realize that it is based on communication and spending time with the person that you want to be your friend. This is the same when it comes to our relationship with God. How do you think we build our relationship with God?
5. Look again at Psalms 119:1-14. What are verses 1-3 talking about?
6. What changes in verses 4-14?
7. The writer of this psalm shows us that he has a relationship with God by telling us how important being in God's word is and then by praying to Him. How does this fact show a relationship with God?
8. Prayer is simply talking to God. Reading or knowing His Word, laws or precepts is allowing God to talk to you, which is how you build your relationship with Him. When you think about how storms affect your lives, how important is having a relationship with God and why?
9. You are here this week to help people who have gone through real life storms and possibly also mental, emotional, or spiritual storms. How is prayer and Bible study going to help you this week as you meet these people?
10. A great way to remember how to pray is through the acronym ACTS:  
A-adoration or praising God  
C-confession or telling God how you messed up  
T-thanksgiving  
S-supplication, which is praying for others
11. As you go through this week, make sure you think about how you are coming closer to God and to others through prayer and Bible study.

## Fasting

1. There are many different ways that you can fast or give up something for a specific time. What are some ways that you have heard people fast?
2. Read: Ezra 8:21-23.
3. Why do Ezra and the people who are following him fast?
4. Fasting is something you do to humble yourself, showing God that you are relying only on Him. What is something that you need God's help to do in your life, and how would fasting help you?
5. Traditionally fasting is done with food. This is done to trust in God completely for everything. If you do not allow yourself to eat, then you are trusting God for your survival. What are some other things you can take out of your life to fast with? Maybe it is something you heard this week, or something you struggled with before this week.
6. How does taking things away help you focus on God?
7. Read: Matthew 4:1-2.
8. Why do you think Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights?
9. Sometimes fasting is done to help us prepare our hearts and minds to serve God, and that is what Jesus was about to do. He was going to start His ministry. If are going to serve God, we need to realize that we need His blessing to do what He wants, and fasting helps us to rely fully on God.
10. As you help people this week, think of things you can fast from that will help you focus on God. And if you want to fast from a meal, make sure that you talk to a leader about that. Read Matt 6:16-18

## Meditation

(Two paths are provided, one with the video and one without)

**Video:** Watch meditation clip



1. When we think of meditation, we normally think about things that were portrayed in this video. But the Bible talks about meditation in a different way. Read Psalms 1:1-3.
2. After reading that Psalm, do you think there are differences between how the video talks about meditation, and how the Bible talks about meditation?
3. What are some similarities between the video and the Bible?

**(Please go to point 4 below)**

### **Without the Video:**

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word mediation?
2. Read Psalm 1:1-3. How does what you read in these verses cause you to think differently about mediation?
3. Picture a tree next to a stream. Think about the water the tree draws from the stream in order to grow. Talk about how Scripture nurtures a person's growth and what practical steps each person can take to make this a regular part of life.

### **Continue, both groups:**

4. Read Psalms 119:46-48, 76-79, and 97-99.
5. Meditation is something that is very important to the writer of this Psalm, but the question of what biblical meditation really is still remains. It is not just sitting with your legs crossed and pushing everything out of your mind. It's instead pushing every thing out of your mind, except God's word. So what are some practical ways you can do this?
6. Read Psalm 1:1-2 again: How can you meditate day and night?
7. Things that work for meditating day and night are memorization, different kinds of music, and reading a verse more than one time. Can you think of one of these methods that will work best for you?
8. How does taking time to meditate on God's word help you to help others?
9. In this day and age, we are really busy and we need time to rest; not only physically rest, but also spiritually rest with our Maker. One of the things the video gets right is that we need to slow down to meditate. We need to be intentional. Think about how you can take some time to slow down and meditate this week and also when you get back into your daily life.

## Two Masters

(Two paths are provided, one with video and one without)

Read Luke 16:13-15

1. When you read this verse and hear the word "master," what do you think about?
2. A lot of time we look at the word master and think teacher, principal, coach or youth leader. While they are masters, they are not the type of master that this portion of scripture is talking about.

### Video path:

3. Watch this:  End it: Shine a Light on Slavery

4. After watching this, what do you think of masters?

### Without the Video:

3. Think about recent news stories that relate to masters. List a few as a group, then in pairs or triples, talk about what it would be like to be under the dominance of the masters you discussed. (in case you need help- Nigeria had a major story about girls being taken by men in the middle of the day)
4. After thinking about these media events, what do you think of masters?

### Continue, both groups:

5. Verse 15 talks about others. How does he refer to them?
6. Who are masters in your life, or whom do you live your life to please?
7. Who do you want to live your life for? God who equals love, or money/others who equal this world?

## Think About Such Things

1. When you watch TV or movies or listen to music, why do you choose the things you choose?
2. What are some movies or TV shows that you watched recently?
3. What is your favorite song or songs on the radio or on your phone right now?
4. Read Philippians 4:8-9
5. What is your favorite verse in the Bible?
6. Compared to thinking about your favorite movie or TV show, how hard was it to think about your favorite verse?
7. It is important that we think about the things listed in these verses. After this week what are some ways you can better think about what Philippians 4:8-9 talks about?
8. As you go home, make sure that you apply the things that you learned this week. If you don't, you won't be strong in the storm and won't be able to help others to be strong in the storm.