

# LEADER'S GUIDE

## PART FOUR

*The*  
*Challenge*  
to  
TRUST  
on the  
Path to Peace

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TEN



## WEEK TEN – PRACTICING TRUST

DAY 32 PREPARE FOR ANOTHER STORM

DAY 33 REMEMBER GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

DAY 34 STUDY GOD'S WORD

DAY 35 CLAIM GOD'S PROMISES

### FOR THE LEADER

Pray for the members of your group to be open to discovering new ways they can put into practice what they have learned. Ask God to open their eyes and their hearts to a greater understanding of how to trust Him more fully. Pray for wisdom and discernment and for God to speak through you as you lead the group this week.

### WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

### DAY 32: PREPARE FOR ANOTHER STORM (15 MIN)

PAGE 229

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 32:**

*We live in Texas where it rarely snows and only gets moderately cold, but we recently experienced an unprecedented hard freeze that lasted a full week. We were warned the severe weather was coming and were instructed in what we needed to do to be ready. Many of us stocked up on water and firewood and made sure we had a week's worth of food that could be stored and prepared without power—just in case. Well the storm arrived, and we were iced in for nearly a week with extensive power outages. Some people in our community were well-prepared and made it through the storm without difficulty and even shared their homes and resources with others. However, there were also members of our community who did not heed the warning and had felt preparing was unnecessary. That is something*

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*they soon regretted when they realized they had no power, no heat, and were very limited on food options for the week. You see, we were all told a storm was coming, but our choices of whether or not to prepare varied and so were our experiences. Jesus warned us we will face storms in this life, but are we heeding His warning and preparing for them? In John 16, Jesus states we will have troubles in this world, but immediately following His warnings are His assurances that He has overcome this world and its hardships and reminds us we can find peace in Him. As we prepare for the next “storm” headed our way, we can be assured God has made available to us what we need to weather it and how to find peace in its midst. There will be no greater protection for our minds and our hearts than to anchor our trust in Him. “Part Four: Practicing Trust” offers us practical ways of how we can strengthen our foundation of trust in God, so we can be prepared for the storms that are certain to come our way.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 233)

- Why is it helpful Jesus warns us of the hardships to come as one of His followers?
- How can that knowledge equip you for challenges you are currently facing and will face in the future?
- What lies does Satan want you to believe about suffering and how does it lead to discouragement, hopelessness, or fear?
- What “storm” are you enduring today or expecting in the future?
- What can you do to experience peace instead of anxiousness in the midst of the storms?

#### *In the Word* (Page 234)

According to the following verses, how does God help us in the midst of storms?

- Isaiah 25:4
- Psalm 46:1–2
- Psalm 91:14–16

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 234)

- Read Isaiah 28:16. Because God is your cornerstone, what is something you can trust Him with today?

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#### DAY 33 REMEMBER GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (15 MIN)

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**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 33:**

*I love "lists," so for years I would make a packing list whenever we go on a trip—whether it is a family trip to the beach or a writing retreat on my own. And yet, inevitably, there would be something I would forget to pack—sunscreen, a child's blanket, a phone charger, or perhaps my sunglasses. One day it occurred to me I should make a list and save it on the computer, so I can add to it as I think of things I may need or forgot to pack on the last trip. That has been incredibly helpful! And sure enough, each time I refer to my packing list, I am inevitably surprised to see items listed I would have forgotten to pack if I had not made a note. Making a list reminds us of things we may forget, and what is more important than remembering how God has proven His faithfulness in our lives over and over again? As we continue to face the storms of life, we need to remember all that God is capable of and the many ways He has demonstrated He is the Promise-Keeper, Healer, Provider, Refuge, and so much more. We need to remember He has never failed us or forsaken us, and He has never left us. Because our memories will ultimately fail us, we need to document the ways we have seen God demonstrate His faithfulness in our lives and in the lives of those we love and continually proclaim His faithfulness to others!*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 240)

- What has God done in the past you need to be reminded of today?
- How does that encourage you and give you hope?
- What will you do to record God's acts of faithfulness in your life, so you can be reminded of them in the future?
- Who is someone you know who could be encouraged in their own circumstances by hearing about how God has demonstrated His faithfulness in your life? What is your plan to share with them?

#### *In the Word* (Page 241)

What can we learn from the following verses about God's faithfulness and how we can remember it?

- Isaiah 26:12
- 1 Chronicles 16:8–14
- Joshua 4:1–7

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#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 241)

- Read Philippians 4:19. Because God is your provider, what is something you can trust Him with today?

#### DAY 34 STUDY GOD'S WORD (15 MIN)

PAGE 243

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 34:**

*I have often joked that it sure would be nice if there were an instruction manual for life, but that is exactly what God gives us in the Bible. Perhaps the Bible won't teach me how to change a lightbulb or a flat tire, but it will show me the changes I need to make in my life. It may not specifically address how to resolve every relationship issue I am facing, but it very clearly lays out what the relationships in my life should look like. We may read the Bible and still be uncertain as to what exactly Heaven and eternity with God will look like, but we can be certain those are promised to us. We purchased a new television several months ago that allows us to access various streaming services, and I keep meaning to learn how to use the complicated remote so I can enjoy those features. However, I have repeatedly turned on the television (I have successfully located the power button!) but end up watching basic cable because I keep forgetting to take time to learn how to use the remote. You see, the time to learn how to use the remote is not when I suddenly need it, but I need to have that knowledge so I am ready to use it when the need arises. That is the same way with God's Word. We need to study it and allow God to write it on our hearts, so we will already know it and be ready to trust it in times of need. We need to be familiar with its truths and instructions, so we will be better prepared for the storms which come our way. Although theologians and scholars have studied the Bible for centuries, no one has completely mastered it nor fully comprehended all of its mysteries. The Bible is God's powerful, transformative, Living Word and will always challenge us because it is the inspired Word of the Creator of heavens and earth. Studying the Bible is an exciting and lifelong challenge, and as we grow in our faith, we will continue to have new realizations and understandings of God's Word and its inspiration and impact on our lives.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 247)

- What role does God's Word play in your life and your decisions?
- How can you increase the influence of God's Word in your life?
- How can you alter your daily routine to incorporate studying the Bible more consistently?

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- Take a few minutes to find a verse that will encourage you in whatever you are facing today and write it below.

#### *In the Word* (Page 248)

According to the following verses, what are some of the purposes of God's Word in your life?

- Isaiah 55:10–11
- Psalm 119:105
- 2 Timothy 3:16–17

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 248)

- Read Ezekiel 12:25. Because God speaks, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### DAY 35 CLAIM GOD'S PROMISES (15 MIN)

PAGE 251

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 35:**

*As we have read this week, so many of God's promises are like gifts we haven't opened. We all have different reasons why we don't claim those promises and what keeps us from believing God will be faithful to help, heal, or forgive. We often fail to see or acknowledge the ways He has kept His promises in the past and may need to be reminded He will do so again in the future—every, single time. Just yesterday a friend of mine was explaining a very disappointing experience but concluded with: "But God always knows what is best and what I need." She was choosing to claim the promises of God. God promises to make something good of that which we don't see as good. He promises to never leave us and to help us. God promises to always show us the way. Yet all these promises require action on our part. We must claim them. We must believe them. God will never force us to believe in His promises. They are gifts available to us but require that we reach out and take them. What role do God's promises play in your life? Are they simply nice, poetic words from the Bible? Something that other people get to experience in their lives but not you? Something you feel undeserving of and, therefore, refuse to claim for yourself? If we truly believe God is who He says He is, then we must also believe He is capable to do what He says He can do—in addition to remembering what He has already done. God's promises are dependable just as He is. Reflect upon the promises God has already fulfilled—knowing, with confidence, He will continue to do as He promises.*

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#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 255)

- Which of God's promises do you need to claim in your life today?
- Why do you think you fail to trust in God's promises even when you know doing so would benefit you?
- What in your life might be preventing you from receiving the full blessings of God's promises?
- What can you do to imprint more of God's promises on your mind and on your heart?

#### *In the Word* (Page 256)

According to the following verses, what do we need to do in order to live under God's promised blessings?

- Psalm 37:5–6
- Jeremiah 17:7–8
- Psalm 34:17–20

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 256)

- Read Joshua 23:14. Because God is the Promise Keeper, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### WRAP IT UP

**Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week Ten from Cindy:**

*Thankfully, the Bible forewarns us we will face trials of many kinds in an effort to prepare us for the challenges to come. But with the assurance of trials comes the declaration of God's promises. Throughout the Bible God promises to equip us with everything we need to navigate the storms of life. In preparation we must arm ourselves with the Word of God and remember the ways we have seen Him bring victory in the past and claim His promise to do so in the days ahead. Trusting that God will be faithful to keep His promises is what grants us hope and gives us peace. May God bless you and lead you as you continue on this journey.*

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#### FOR NEXT WEEK

Remind everyone to read Days 36-39 and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.



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### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK ELEVEN



## WEEK ELEVEN – PRACTICING TRUST

DAY 36 TRUST IN THE DARK

DAY 37 SHIFT YOUR HOPE

DAY 38 SEEK AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

DAY 39 PLUG INTO GOD'S POWER

### FOR THE LEADER

Be praying for the last few weeks of discussions and that each member of your group would be open to God's teaching and instruction. Pray that the group continues to share in a way that is transparent and vulnerable as they grow in their trust. Pray for wisdom and discernment and for God to speak through you as you lead the group this week.

### WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

### DAY 36 TRUST IN THE DARK (15 MIN)

PAGE 259

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 36:**

*There is a long hallway in our home that is completely dark at night, and when I have to walk down it, I actually run my fingers along the wall to make sure I am walking in a straight line toward my bedroom in order to avoid running into the wall. I can always trust the wall is there, and if I just keep touching it as a reference point, I will finally come into a place with light. Sometimes life feels like that. We can't see where we are going and can easily get disoriented or confused. We are uncertain of the way to go or decisions to make, and we need to be reassured God is right beside us—He is our wall and our reference point. As long as we are reaching out and trusting Him, we will make it safely to wherever we are headed—to the place where we will finally see some light. God keeps us steady and makes our paths*

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*straight. Trusting God in the cover of darkness does not come naturally or easily. Instead, darkness more often ushers in uncertainty and fear. It veils the hope God wants us to grasp and impairs our ability to see—and remember—His promises and truths. Trusting when darkness prevails takes intentional effort. This past week we read about several examples of those who chose to trust God in incredibly challenging circumstances, and although we are not likely to be imprisoned in a foreign country and, thankfully, most of us will not have to stand vigil at our child's bedside as they near death, our day-to-day struggles can cause varying degrees of distress and frustration, and we can feel as if darkness has descended upon us. When we really do feel blinded and blindsided by our circumstances, trusting God is how we find strength and hope, and it is how we steady ourselves as we walk toward the light and find purpose and understanding. We can walk in the confidence He has and will continue to supply our every need and that He is a source of light in the darkest night.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 263)

- When did you or someone you know respond by choosing to worship in the midst of dark circumstances?
- What trouble is weighing on your heart today?
- Identify what in your life obstructs the light God is trying to shine upon you. It may be a person, belief, habit, etc.
- What have you learned that can help you overcome those obstructions?
- Give an example from the past when God led you out of a dark place and into His light.

#### *In the Word* (Page 263)

According to the following verses, what are some of the ways you can receive help from God in the midst of dark and troubling times?

- Psalm 23:4
- Psalm 145:18
- Psalm 31:14–15

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 264)

- Read 1 John 1:5. Because God is light, what is something you can trust Him with today?

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#### DAY 37 SHIFT YOUR HOPE (15 MIN)

PAGE 267

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 37:**

*Some people are hopeful by nature. They see the good in others and in their circumstances. I have several friends who are definitely half-glass-full people, and most of the time, I try to do the same. It can be difficult when you feel the world around you—and some of the people around you—tend to be more negative. But even for those of us who consider themselves hopeful by nature, we can become discouraged. We each need to decide if we are going to be a person filled with hope or one who anticipates the worst. I asked a friend once why she tends to expect the worst to happen, and she said it is because it makes it easier when it actually transpires. However, she also acknowledged that most of the time it does not happen the way she expects. Hope is something we choose to have, and we need to place our hope in that which we can trust. If we place our hope in imperfect people, we will be hurt. If we place our hope in our finances or talents, we will be disappointed. But if we place our hope in our loving, merciful, sovereign God, we can be assured He knows us, love us, and is working all things together for our good. We have spent the past several weeks learning more about why we can trust God and why we can place our hope in Him. As John Mark Comer said, “Never, ever walk out on hope. She is your lifeline. Without hope, you are dead in the water.” Fortunately, when you have lost hope or feel it slipping from your grasp, you can always reach out and reclaim it. The hope of God is always right in front of you, and He desperately wants you to cling to it. Ask God to restore your hope, ask someone to remind you why there is hope, and especially be ready to remind others why there is hope. We all need someone to help carry our banner of hope when we are unable. Look for who is carrying yours and be willing to carry it for someone else.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 271)

- In what area of your life today do you need renewed hope?
- Which aspect of God’s character and which of His promises can you claim to cultivate hope in that area of your life?
- How has Satan tried to steal your hope?
- Is there someone in your life for whom you have carried the banner of hope when they were unable to do so? Who has done that for you?
- Who can you ask to help you carry the banner of hope for the circumstances you are currently facing? How might that help you?

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#### *In the Word* (Page 272)

What do the following verses say about those who place their hope in the Lord?

- Isaiah 40:31
- Psalm 147:10–11
- Psalm 146:1–5

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 272)

- Read Romans 15:13. Because God is hope, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### DAY 38 SEEK AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE (15 MIN)

PAGE 275

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 38:**

*God is “I AM.” He always has been and forever will be. He is Creator of all things and knows all things. He sees every heart at every moment, and yet He cares about the details of our lives. He knows the very number of hairs on your head (Luke 12:7). How can a God who is so big care about things that seem so small? That is part of His awe and wonder, and that is why we can trust Him. His perspective of our circumstances and the world around us is in the context of eternity and not what is happening today or this week, month or even this year—but all of eternity. Each of our lives is simply a tiny dot on an eternal timeline. Today is part of a beautiful work of art God is creating, and He promises it is a masterpiece that is beautiful and will benefit each of us. What seems like endless suffering or hardship is not eternal. God promises us that our suffering will end, and, as Christ followers, we will spend eternity with Him where there is no grief, no fear, and no tears. When today’s burdens seem heavy, consider them in the context of the vastness of God and time, and ask God to give you a glimpse of His perspective—the eternal one.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 279)

- What in your life does not make sense from a human, earthly perspective?
- What do you think God’s perspective is of that situation?
- How can applying an eternal perspective to your current circumstances give you strength and hope?
- Why do you find hope in knowing there will be no more tears, suffering, or pain in heaven?

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#### *In the Word* (Page 280)

According to the following verses, how does God want to teach you about your present sufferings and the eternal hope He desires for you?

- Colossians 3:2
- Ecclesiastes 7:14
- John 16:33

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 281)

- Read Psalm 90:2. Because God is everlasting, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### DAY 39 PLUG INTO GOD'S POWER (15 MIN)

PAGE 283

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 39:**

*I know someone who was recently diagnosed with sleep apnea. The doctor told him he never engages in either Stage 3 or REM sleep. Never. He never goes into deep sleep and, therefore, never truly receives the rest his body needs. The doctor went on to explain that lack of deep sleep leads to physical weariness, mental fatigue, and additional stress on his heart and other organs. Not getting sufficient rest has created systemic impairment to his mind and body's ability to properly function. Thankfully, there is an effective treatment for his condition, and he is eager to pursue it. In addition to sleep, we also need the daily restoration of God's power to function properly. When we are running low on His power, our thoughts become impaired and so do our relationships. We tire from the challenges we are facing and become weary and fatigued. Thankfully, there is an effective treatment for restoring God's power, but we must first recognize when we are "running low" and then eagerly pursue the remedy. The treatments to refill our souls with God's power include—among other things—studying His Word, knowing His character, and communicating with Him. One of the great benefits of staying charged up is when our own spiritual power is restored, we can share our own spiritual energy with those who are running low.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 287)

- Do you feel depleted spiritually, physically, or emotionally? Why?
- How do you know when you are at the point of depletion?
- In time of need, where have you turned to find strength apart from God?
- What are the dangers of seeking those alternative power sources?

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- What helps you to remain plugged in and powered by God?

#### *In the Word* (Page 287)

- According to the following verses, what can you learn about God's power and how you can access it?
- 2 Peter 1:3
- John 15:4–5
- Isaiah 40:28–29

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 288)

- Read Jeremiah 32:17. Because God is all-powerful, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### WRAP IT UP

#### **Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week Eleven from Cindy:**

*Pursuing trust when darkness prevails and our hope is fading can be especially challenging. It requires us to believe God's promises of hope and light. We need to be willing to reach out to Him and steady ourselves on His truths. It is easy to place our hope in people, finances, accomplishments, and dreams, but we need to remember the God is the One, dependable source of hope Who will never fail us and will always fulfill His promises. We also need to put the circumstances of our lives in the context of eternity and consider what God is capable of accomplishing in His glory and His power. Our circumstances don't have to change for our perspectives to change, and yet when we begin to see life from an eternal perspective, everything changes! And when we feel we are running on fumes, we need to go to the source that will always recharge our hearts and minds. He is the source of strength and power and is always waiting for us to plug back in! May God bless you and lead you as you continue on this journey.*

### FOR NEXT WEEK

Remind everyone to read Days 40-43 and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer

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**LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TWELVE**



**WEEK TWELVE – PRACTICING TRUST**

DAY 40 DEVELOP A HEART OF GRATITUDE

DAY 41 CRY OUT FOR UNDERSTANDING

DAY 42 DON'T MISS THE JOURNEY

DAY 43 PRAISE GOD

**FOR THE LEADER**

Pray for each member of your group that God would continue to strengthen their faith and build their trust in Him through the fellowship of your group and the discussions each week. Pray for perseverance as you near the end of the study, and pray for wisdom and discernment and for God to speak through you as you lead the group this week.

**WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER**

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

**DAY 40 DEVELOP A HEART OF GRATITUDE (15 MIN)**

PAGE 289

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 40:**

*Have you ever given a gift and felt disappointed by the recipient's response? Or perhaps you gave one of your kids a gift and immediately noticed they were disappointed the gift was not what they were hoping for. I wonder if God feels that way at times when He sees our response to His blessings. Ever wished you had more financial freedom or that your house was a little larger? Wished you had curly hair rather than straight or the other way around? Wish you had a green thumb or the ability to be more outgoing and engaging in conversation? That is our human nature—to want what we don't have, but as in so many things, we are called to not give in to our human nature and, instead, take on the mind of Christ. It is easy to lose sight of what we are given by focusing on what we don't have, and our lack of*

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*thankfulness is surely disappointing to God who has blessed us in so many ways. In the early days of this journey, we discussed the importance of breaking old, unhealthy habits and developing new, healthy ones. When it comes to developing a heart of gratitude, that is what is required. There will always be something for which we can be grateful—the sky, a sunrise or sunset, the air we breathe, food to eat, or the freedom to vote or worship or read the Bible. Whether or not we choose to recognize those blessings and express our gratitude is a decision we can make—and re-make—each and every day. Recognizing that for which we are grateful, declaring it to others, and proclaiming our gratitude to God are all ways we can strengthen the thankfulness portion of our heart. There are songs we can listen to declaring our thanks to God even when we are not feeling it, and we can write out what we are thankful for in order to impress it upon our minds. Practice gratitude in all you do, and it will, hopefully, become a habit and also contagious.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 292)

- List five things in your life for which you are grateful:
- What is something for which you are struggling to be grateful?
- Why is it challenging to be thankful for the difficulties in life?
- Why does God command us to be thankful in all circumstances?
- What is one way you practice gratitude?

#### *In the Word* (Page 293)

What can you learn from the following verses about developing a heart of gratitude?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- Psalm 95:1–3
- Colossians 2:6–7

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 294)

- Read Psalm 54:4. Because God is your help, what is something you can trust Him with today?

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#### DAY 41 CRY OUT FOR UNDERSTANDING (15 MIN)

PAGE 295

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 41:**

*I remember very clearly one night when I was on my knees praying to God for understanding. I had gotten to a point in a situation that I just didn't know what to do, what to say, or how to react. I was filled with frustration and also anxiousness and pretty quickly realized I was not trusting God...again! I attempted to sort through my thoughts and tried to think through what I needed to do in that moment when I realized I needed to seek God's insight and cry out for understanding, so that's what I did. And God clearly and faithfully answered my prayer—as He always does. My lack of understanding does not surprise God, nor does it frustrate Him. He knows I am limited by my human, finite perspective and mind, and He patiently waits—again and again—for me to recognize my limitations and seek His infinite wisdom. Sometimes I come to that realization sooner rather than later and can short-circuit the frustration, and when I do, it makes life so much easier. Asking God to grant us wisdom and understanding is so important, but so is listening to His response and being open to the answer. Sometimes we think we want His perspective and answer, and yet we are resistant to receiving it. When we cry out for understanding and ask for wisdom, we must be open and obedient when He provides it.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 298)

- Why do you think you have a need to make sense of your life, your circumstances, and the world?
- When you cry out to God, are you expressing a sincere desire for understanding, or do you more often express only your frustrations to Him?
- When have you cried out for understanding and seen God be faithful to answer?
- What or who gets in the way of you hearing and receiving God's answers to your prayers for knowledge and understanding?
- What circumstances has God worked "together for good" in your life?

#### *In the Word* (Page 299)

According to these verses, why is it important to seek understanding from God in our circumstances?

- 1 Corinthians 13:12
- Ecclesiastes 7:12
- Proverbs 28:5

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### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TWELVE

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 299)

- Read Psalm 147:4-5. Because God is all-knowing, what is something you can trust Him with today?

#### DAY 42 DON'T MISS THE JOURNEY (15 MIN)

PAGE 301

#### **Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 42:**

*Sometimes it would be so nice to take a shortcut. A shortcut to get to the mountains instead of the usual 15-hour drive. A shortcut to the mall instead of passing through four traffic lights. And definitely a shortcut through the challenges we face in life. Shortcuts save time and energy and can shorten the length of our suffering. However, there are also things we would miss with those shortcuts—time with our family in the car, seeing the new stores or homes as we pass through town, and the lessons God needs us to experience along the way. Once again, God, with His eternal perspective and perfect wisdom, knows what we need, and the journey along the way is the path by which He teaches us and refines us. It's easy to want to take the shorter way and the path with the least resistance or trials, but that is not what is necessarily best for us in God's eyes. There would be missed opportunities for relationships, ministering to others, and being ministered to. The "easy way" provides fewer opportunities to grow our faith and deepen our trust and does not require a dependence upon God. We are each on our own journey with our own lessons and opportunities for growth, and instead of wishing them away or hurrying through them, we need to embrace them and grow through them. Our lives really are made up of journeys we don't want to miss.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 305)

- Describe a time in your life when God has redirected your journey and how you responded to that change.
- Why do you think it can be difficult for you when God redirects you?
- What has God been teaching you on your journey?
- Is there a new direction in which you feel God is calling you today? If so what do you think it might be?
- What can you do to trust Him more fully on the journey you are on today?

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### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TWELVE

#### *In the Word* (Page 305)

According to the following verses, what does God want you to understand about the journeys in your life?

- Romans 5:3–4
- Philippians 1:6
- Psalm 23:1–6

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 306)

- Read Psalm 32:8. Because God is your guide, what is something you can trust Him with today?

<b>DAY 43 PRAISE GOD (15 MIN)</b>	PAGE 309
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**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 43:**

*As you probably can tell if you have listened to any of the song links at the end of each chapter, I love praise music. Based on your personality and interests, you have your own ways to direct your focus and heart on God. Even praising God in song looks different for each of us. Some may prefer traditional hymns while other express their worship through contemporary Christian music. If you have yet to discover what avenue most effectively draws your heart to praise God, make it a priority to discover that. The Bible is filled with examples of praising God and instructions in how to express our worship—in times of celebration and in moments of grief and heartache. God wants our heart's desire to have His praise always on our lips and constantly in our heart (Psalm 34:1). This is another lifelong habit that may need cultivating and something we need to continually practice. God doesn't need our praise, but He knows we need to praise Him. It blesses Him, and it transforms us. It pleases Him, and it empowers us. God wants us to be reminded of Who He is and all He is capable of, and that is what happens when we channel our thoughts and prayers to Him in praise. Declaring our praises to God as well as to others redirects our hearts and the hearts of others to Him who is deserving of all praise and glory forever and ever—amen!*

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TWELVE

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 312)

- In what ways do you demonstrate your praises to God?
- How does the act of worship impact you emotionally and spiritually?
- Describe a time in your life when you found it difficult to express your praises to God.
- Why do you think the Bible commands us to praise God in good times as well as in bad?
- How can you use the act of praising God as a prayer for a particular person in your life?

#### *In the Word* (Page 313)

According to the following verses, what are some additional reasons we are called to praise God?

- Psalm 71:8
- Psalm 105:1
- 1 Chronicles 29:12–13

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 314)

- Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-11. Because God is exalted, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## WRAP IT UP

**Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week Twelve from Cindy:**

*The Bible instructs us to have a heart of gratitude and be thankful in all circumstances. God knows we are unable to do that perfectly, but we can be intentional and make an effort to create a habit of thankfulness in our conversations with God and with others. God is always at work and always willing to provide knowledge and direction when we seek Him, but we must be willing to hear His response and follow His instructions. And when He does respond to our pleas, we need to be sure and thank Him. There are also times we cry out for understanding and plead with God to bring us to the end of a particularly difficult journey, but there may still be more lessons and opportunities for growth God needs us to experience. Cultivating the habit of expressing our praise and gratitude to God—especially in difficult times—is a very important step as we walk the path to deepen our trust in Him. May God bless you and lead you as you continue on this journey.*

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK TWELVE

#### FOR NEXT WEEK

Remind everyone to read Days 44-47 and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.



*The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*  
**LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THIRTEEN**



**WEEK THIRTEEN – PRACTICING TRUST**

DAY 44 OPEN YOUR HEART TO HELP

DAY 45 UNDERSTAND YOUR PURPOSE

DAY 46 REORIENT YOUR LIFE

DAY 47 BE STILL AND KNOW GOD

**FOR THE LEADER**

Pray especially for the members of your group who may need to seek additional help or counsel. Ask God to reveal to you who that might be and how you can encourage them. Ask God to reinforce the lessons you have learned in your own trust journey through the study, and pray for wisdom and discernment and for God to speak through you as you lead the group this week.

**WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER**

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to praying for each other throughout the week.

**DAY 44 OPEN YOUR HEART TO HELP (15 MIN)**

PAGE 315

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 44:**

*I can't even recall the number of times I have told a stranger: "Thank you for being so kind. It really makes a difference." Sometimes I just really need someone to be kind when it's been one of those days. I remember those grief-filled days after my mom died when someone would do something kind or thoughtful—unaware of my heartache—and I would be moved to tears. You see, we all need help from others—whether that be through friendship, prayer, advice, inspiration, fellowship, accountability, someone to listen, or words of encouragement. Sometimes we need financial assistance and sometimes we just need someone to be kind. And yet there are lots of reasons we don't seek help or are resistant to receiving it. For some of us, our pride gets in the way, or our insecurity. It may be we don't know*

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THIRTEEN

*where to find help or perhaps we don't even recognize we need help. God created us to be in fellowship with others. God declared Adam needed a "helpmate" (Genesis 2:18), and so do we. Ask God to reveal to you the area(s) in your life you could benefit from receiving help, pray to find that help, and then be open to receiving it. It can be a difficult thing to do, but it is the example even Jesus sets for us. If the Savior of the world sought the help of others, so should we.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 319)

- Why do you think God designed us to need the help of others?
- Why can it be difficult to ask for help and to receive it?
- In what area(s) of your life does God want you to ask for help today?
- What steps can you take to get the help you need?

#### *In the Word* (Page 319)

What can you learn from the following verses about asking for help?

- Ecclesiastes 4:9–12
- Galatians 6:2
- Exodus 18:13–23

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 320)

- Read 2 Timothy 4:18. Because God is your rescuer, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## DAY 45 UNDERSTAND YOUR PURPOSE (15 MIN)

PAGE 321

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 45:**

*Everyone needs to be confident they have a purpose in life. Some people seek their purpose in their jobs or their roles as a spouse or parent. Others find their purpose in their philanthropic work, while others feel fulfilled by achieving athletic success or fame. There is nothing wrong with any of those things, but they are simply avenues through which we need to be fulfilling our God-given purpose which is to know God and make Him known. We need to make it a life-long goal to pursue a deeper understanding of Who God is and what He is capable of accomplishing. We will never fully grasp who He is, but as we expand our knowledge of Him, we are able to deepen our trust in Him and make Him known through*

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THIRTEEN

*our jobs, roles, skills, success, and even in our failures. We are able to declare His glory to those we encounter each day in our families, among our friends, and with strangers who cross our path. If our purpose is to know God and make God known, our success will not be measured by the world's standards, and our achievements will be regardless of how much money we make or how esteemed we are by others. We also will never completely fail at our purpose because every day we are able to start over and try again. We get to "reset" again and again and again. God's love never ends, and His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). If I failed to act in a way that reflects God an hour ago, I can do so the hour before me. If I didn't grow in my knowledge of God yesterday, I can work to do so today. It is never too late to understand your purpose or fulfill it.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 325)

- What can you do to further increase your knowledge of God?
- In what ways does your life reflect God and direct others to see Him?
- What are some ways your words, actions, or attitudes fail to reflect God and direct others to Him?
- What needs to look different in your life now that you have an understanding you were created to know God and make Him known?

#### *In the Word* (Page 326)

What can you learn from the following verses about God's purpose for your life?

- Matthew 28:19–20
- Matthew 5:16
- Ephesians 2:8–10

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 326)

- Read Psalm 25:4-5. Because God is your teacher, what is something you can trust Him with today?

<b>DAY 46 REORIENT YOUR LIFE (15 MIN)</b>	<b>(PAGE 329)</b>
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**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 46:**

*Making your life all about God seems impossible and, perhaps, intimidating. After all, if I truly orient my life to what God wants for me instead of what I want for myself, what will I have to give up? What changes do I need to make? Remember, we are not called to reorient our lives to a God who we don't*

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THIRTEEN

*know. Instead, we are entrusting our lives today and in the days ahead to the God who loves us and cares for us. The God who has an eternal perspective and possesses infinite wisdom. The God who created all things and rules all things. We are asked to orient our lives to the One who has written our stories with His pen of perfect love and mercy. When we seek what God wants for our lives and make our decisions accordingly, there is a peace that will prevail even when it is beyond our human comprehension. Jesus lived a life of self-denial, taking up His own cross to follow the will of His father, and we are called to do the same. This life can be incredibly disorienting, confusing our minds and wreaking havoc in our hearts, but reorienting our lives to Who God is and what He desires for us ushers in a supernatural security and undeniable peace even in the midst of uncertainty and turmoil, and that is what God desires for us and promises us.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 332)

- In what ways is your life centered on you, your will, and your desires?
- Is there a person, job, goal, or hardship currently demanding a disproportionate amount of your attention? How does that interfere with your ability to trust God more fully?
- What is God calling you to lay down so your hands are free to pick up your cross and follow in the footsteps of Jesus?
- How is your mindset altered when your heart is oriented to God and His purposes instead of your own?
- What can you do to see more clearly what God desires for your life and strengthen your ability to “daily” follow Jesus?

#### *In the Word* (Page 333)

According to the following verses, what are some things you can do to reorient your life to God and His purposes for you?

- Matthew 10:39
- Matthew 22:36–40
- Deuteronomy 6:4–9

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 334)

- Read Isaiah 26:4. Because God is your rock, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THIRTEEN

#### DAY 47 BE STILL AND KNOW GOD (15 MIN)

PAGE 335

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 47:**

*Being still is incredibly difficult and something I struggle with. I don't watch television, not because nothing interests me or I don't have time, but because I don't like to sit still that long. I have a similar problem with reading books. I don't read quickly enough for them to keep my interest, and that, too, would require I sit still. It can also be a challenge to find time each morning to spend alone with God in stillness, but I have found it to be the most peaceful—and most important—time of my day. It is a habit I have worked hard to cultivate, and when I neglect to make that time a priority, I often find myself missing the peace God promises when my heart and my mind are oriented to Him. Being still comes more naturally for some of us than others, but all of us need to prioritize that time in stillness to focus on who God is and what He wants to teach us about Himself. God doesn't call us to be still apart from Him but, instead, understands that stillness is possible because of Him. When we are still and quiet, we are better able to hear God speak and recognize His direction and answers to our prayers. Until we recognize the importance and the value of time spent in solitude with God, we will fail to make it a priority in our lives and struggle to find the peace for which we are searching.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 339)

- What have you convinced yourself you need instead of time alone with God?
- How do you know when God is speaking to you?
- What interferes with your ability to be still, and what can help you be still?
- Are there times you fear being left alone in silence with your thoughts? If so, why?
- What have you learned about God that will help you to achieve the solitude and stillness He desires for you?

#### *In the Word* (Page 340)

What can you learn from the following verses about being still, spending time alone with God, and hearing His voice?

- Psalm 62:5
- Matthew 6:6
- John 10:27–28

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK THIRTEEN

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 340)

- Read Nahum 1:7. Because God is your refuge, what is something you can trust Him with today?

#### WRAP IT UP

#### **Read aloud these concluding thoughts on Week Thirteen from Cindy:**

*Although it is not always an easy thing to do, acknowledging we need help and opening our hearts to receiving it opens the door for healing and growth. One of the ways God wants to express His love for us is through the love and support of those He places in our lives, but we must open the door to them. Remember our purpose in life is to know God and make Him known, and receiving help is allowing others to make God known to us. If we truly understand that is our purpose, then we will see the importance of reorienting our lives to God and what He wants for us. In an effort to do so, we must find times of solitude and stillness, so He can speak His truth, instruction, and conviction into our lives. The world is loud, and we need to be intentional to create time to silence the shouts and hear Him speak. May God bless you and lead you as you continue on this journey.*

#### FOR NEXT WEEK

Remind everyone to read Days 48-50 and the Conclusion and take time to complete the *Challenge Questions*, reflect on the verses *In the Word*, and identify how they are *Practicing Trust*. Encourage them to be ready to share their answers and the insights God has shown them.

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.



*The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*  
**LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK FOURTEEN**



**WEEK FOURTEEN – PRACTICING TRUST**

DAY 48 WAIT ON GOD  
 DAY 49 PRAY GOD'S WILL  
 DAY 50 SURRENDER IT ALL  
 CONCLUSION: THE FINAL WORD

**FOR THE LEADER**

Thank God again for the group you have led through the study. Praise Him and give Him glory for any new insight and understanding you and your group have received through your time together. Ask God to show each of you how to continue to build and strengthen your trust in Him in new and creative ways. Pray for wisdom and discernment and for God to speak through you as you lead the group this final week.

**WELCOME & OPEN WITH PRAYER**

Begin your time together in prayer. Encourage members of the group to share their prayer requests. Provide the group an opportunity to pray for one another, or you may choose to pray for the group. Also commit to continue praying for each other.

**DAY 48 WAIT ON GOD (15 MIN)**

PAGE 343

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 48:**

*When our food takes too long to be served, I am usually one of the first to recognize it and make a comment. That's not something I am particularly proud of. There are some areas of my life in which I am able to be patient more easily, but those aren't the ones I need to work on. You see, if I (without fail) believe God is sovereign then I would (without fail) realize that even waiting longer on a meal means He is working to accomplish His purpose in my life, in the life of the person I am eating with, and even the life of the person serving us. It may be something that seems inconsequential, but He is at work. Everything has a purpose and that means there is also purpose in our waiting. When we talk about*

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*trusting God, we are not only talking about doing so with the significant circumstances in life but also with the little details of our day. Our waiting may include having to sit in traffic, wait on a call or text, a decision being deliberated, as well as God's answer to our prayers. When we are in a period of waiting, it is important to remember God is never not at work on our behalf. He never sleeps nor slumbers (Psalm 121:4). He is orchestrating all the details of our lives. Sometimes we may think we are waiting on others when, in reality, we are waiting on God. Waiting can certainly be challenging, but when it is God we are waiting on, it is always worth the wait!*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 347)

- What is something you have been praying for, and what are you doing while you are waiting for God's response?
- What can make waiting especially difficult for you?
- When is a time you chose not to wait on God's direction or response and had to suffer the consequences of your impatience? What did you learn from that experience?
- Even though you have seen God faithfully answer your prayers in the past, why can it still be difficult to trust Him in times of waiting?
- What have you learned about God that can help you wait on Him with greater patience?

#### *In the Word* (Page 348)

What can you learn from the following verses about waiting patiently for God?

- Exodus 3:7
- Romans 8:25
- Isaiah 30:18

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 349)

- Read Psalm 71:5. Because God is your hope, what is something you can trust Him with today?

<b>DAY 49 PRAY GOD'S WILL (15 MIN)</b>	PAGE 351
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**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 49:**

*Learning to pray God's will is something I have worked very hard on in recent years. God began to reveal to me much of my wrestling with my circumstances was actually wrestling with Him, and my*

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### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK FOURTEEN

*unanswered prayers were because my desires were not aligned with His. The more I have learned about God and His character, the more I have realized what I really want is what He wants and what He knows is best. God understands my hesitancy, but as I deepen my trust in Him, I deepen my desire to align my will to His. Prayer doesn't change God or enlighten Him to what is best for us or those we love because He already knows that. Instead, prayer enlightens us to what He already knows is best. When we pray God's will—whether or not it aligns to our own desires—God will always be faithful to answer it. As we pray with open hands, earnestly, and with patience, God will begin aligning our hearts to His, our desires to His, and our will to His. We are instructed to pray in the name of Jesus with thanksgiving, and as it is with so many other spiritual disciplines, we can learn how to do so with intentionality and persistence. Let's ask God to reveal to us how we can continue to learn how to pray His will and be open to receiving it in our lives. When we more fully comprehend that God's will is the path to peace, we become more willing to pray for it.*

### *Challenge Questions* (Page 357)

- Is praying part of your relationship with God and your daily routine? If not, why is that, and what can you do to change it?
- Why can it be challenging to pray for God's will instead of your own?
- What do you think will happen if you consistently pray for God to align your will to His?
- How can you incorporate thanksgiving into your prayers, and why is that important?
- Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication: Which of these do you need to incorporate into your prayers more consistently?

### *In the Word* (Page 358)

What can you learn from the following verses about praying God's will?

- Mark 9: 17–29
- 1 John 5:14
- Romans 1:8–10

### *Practicing Trust* (Page 358)

- Read Revelation 4:11. Because God is worthy, what is something you can trust Him with today?

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK FOURTEEN

#### DAY 50 SURRENDER IT ALL (10-15 MIN)

PAGE 361

**Read aloud the following introduction from Cindy for the discussion for Day 50:**

*I recently traveled on two different trips with high school kids—one I was co-leading with my husband and the other I attended as just one of many chaperones. It was so much less stressful not to be in charge. I didn't have to worry about where we would eat next or a problem with one of the hotel rooms. I rarely had to watch the clock or navigate the kids to what was next. Instead, I listened to those in charge and just did what they said. It was so much easier than being the one responsible because I surrendered to their authority. Those in charge knew the plan and knew what was happening next. I didn't need to know that but, instead, simply needed to follow their lead. That is what God is trying to tell us—to surrender to Him and go where and when He tells us to go and say what He wants us to say and accept the circumstances He brings about in our lives. When we surrender to God's will and authority, we are able to spend more energy on making healthy decisions and pursuing what God wants for us with intentionality. We wrestle less with people and with ourselves. We are trusting Him. Surrendering to anyone—including to God—is against our human nature, even though we have learned that surrendering paves the path to peace. The good news is we are given the opportunity to surrender and reclaim that peace every moment of every day—again and again and again.*

#### *Challenge Questions* (Page 366)

- How is surrender related to trust in your life?
- Have you been living under the illusion your life is in your control and not really God's, and why is that a problem?
- What keeps you from surrendering some aspects of your life to God?
- How can surrendering to God lead to more peace in your life?
- What areas of your life do you need to surrender to God today?

#### *In the Word* (Page 367)

What can you learn from the following verses about surrendering to God?

- Romans 12:1
- James 4:7
- Proverbs 21:30

## *The Challenge to Trust on the Path to Peace*

### LEADER'S GUIDE – WEEK FOURTEEN

#### *Practicing Trust* (Page 368)

- Read Isaiah 12:2. Because God is your salvation, what is something you can trust Him with today?

### THE FINAL WORD

PAGE 369

#### **Read these final thoughts from Cindy on the Conclusion of the study:**

*Although this study was introduced as a 50-day journey, hopefully your personal journey to trust God more fully will be lifelong. We will never completely comprehend the character of God or all He is doing or is capable of doing in our lives and in our world. There will always be circumstances we are unable to reconcile with His goodness, and His ways of thinking will forever be beyond our own. However, God has given us His written Word filled with instructions and encouragements in how to deepen our trust in Him in pursuit of the peace He promises. That peace is a gift paid for by the blood of Jesus with our name written on the tag, just waiting for us to receive it. When worry, anxiousness, resentment, or fear come knocking at your door, recognize them sooner for what they are—Satan's attempt to interfere and capture your trust intended for God. But Satan doesn't win—God does—and He wants you to know Him so you can trust Him and believe that promise. When we understand more fully the character of God, we grow in our confidence to trust Him, and we are more willing to surrender to Him—surrender our lives, our loved ones, our dreams, our circumstances—everything. Let's make the decision today we will continue to trust God and surrender to Him right now and be willing to make that decision again tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that. Let it be our prayer: **Because we know you, Lord, we place our trust in You, and we surrender our lives and our circumstances to You. Now, Lord, please deliver your peace.***

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask one of the group members to close your time with a prayer.

