

## **LIFE Group Leader Handout**

October 7, 2018

### **Our Journey—“Trust Me”**

Pastor Joe Garofalo

#### **Scripture—1 Samuel 24:1-7**

“When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, “Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.” 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats’ Rocks. 3 And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself.[b] Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. 4 And the men of David said to him, “Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’” Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 5 And afterward David’s heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 6 He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord’s anointed.” 7 So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.”

**Main Idea—God uses times of extreme pressure to cultivate supreme confidence in Him.**

#### **How this happened for David:**

He recalled his past victories  
He trusted God’s ways over his own  
He was obedient to God and His Word  
He waited on God’s timing

#### **Application—**

Recall a time of God’s faithfulness to you, perhaps in the face of hard circumstances  
Do you journal, or have you journaled? Why or why not?  
How is your time in the Word and in being obedience to it? Do you read with an intent to apply it to your life?

When a small group includes everything from lifelong believers to faith newbies, helping group members grow in spiritual maturity can feel like an insurmountable task. Consider these four opportunities for maximizing growth when leading a multi-stage group.

**Model Grace.** Multiple stages in small groups offer people the opportunity to model, practice, and receive grace. When there's a mixture of on-the-fence believers, faithful believers, maybe even former believers, your group represents a variety of perspectives present in the world. You have the opportunity to help group members develop relationships with people that may be very different from them. This will equip them to give and receive grace outside your group. Dedicate time to small talk and casual conversation. As counterintuitive as that sounds, people need to get to know each other socially so they can come to understand each other spiritually. Casual conversation over food - be it a meal or coffee and refreshments - will help build trust and deepen relationships within the group.

Incorporate icebreakers at the beginning of your study time. While icebreakers may not seem to have much lasting value, they actually go a long way in setting up a healthy environment that will help group members develop authentic relationships. Icebreakers give group members a chance to interact in both a personal and social way, setting the stage for grace to flow more freely in spiritually challenging conversations.

**See with Fresh Eyes.** When multiple stages of spiritual maturity are represented in a small group, group members are able to see God's Word with fresh eyes. When a lifelong believer—who knows the Word by heart—and a new believer—who is not sure where to start reading—come together for study, both learn new insights.

Read Scripture from multiple translations during your study. Use both a more traditional translation and a modern translation. Consider the differences in how the words are translated and the changes in language over the years.

Research the historical context or commentary for passages that will be studied. When you share the background information, you'll give all group members, regardless of level of maturity, a common place to start. Even better, have some of the more mature believers volunteer to do this research and present it at the meeting. Tap into their knowledge.

Make it clear that all questions are welcome. Whether they're questions of clarification or deeper analysis, members should feel safe asking what's on their mind. Deeper questions may push the new believers to take the next step in their relationship with God; questions from new believers may prompt seasoned believers to take a second look at a very familiar passage.

**Individualize the Education Plan.** God's Word is alive and relevant to our lives, just as it was thousands of years ago. But God's people experience and live out that Word in personal ways. Intentionally planning a discussion that appeals to everyone from new to lifelong believers can encourage spiritual growth at all levels. Empower those further along by asking them to help you in some way. Allow them to organize aspects of the meeting, present background information on a passage, lead a discussion from time to time, or facilitate the group prayer.

**Expect the Unexpected.** When you invite the Holy Spirit to be at work in your group, you should expect the unexpected. Recognize that you are not in control—God is. Follow God's lead in bringing people closer to him, regardless of where they're starting. There is nothing more humbling than watching one of your spiritually mature members break down and share transparently about a struggle while a newer believer offers a hug and reminders of God's love and grace.