

L E A D E R ' S G U I D E

The *Holy Life* Bible Study Series

TRAVELING WITH FRIENDS:

Becoming God's Holy People Together

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BOOK 3

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Introduction

Introduction

If you have not already completed reading the introductory material for book 1 of *The Holy Life Bible Study Series*, it is suggested that you go back and read that now as it will not be repeated for each book. I will, however, repeat the teaching techniques from the leader's guide to book 1 so you won't have to refer back to it every time you want to use different teaching approaches.

Preparing to Teach

Class leader, keep the following guidelines in mind as you prepare to teach this Bible study series:

- Read each book in its entirety before you begin the group study.
- Read this leader's guide in its entirety to get a feel for the general direction of the book study.
- Think of any teaching resources you will need for each individual session such as a white-board, chart paper, markers, overhead projector, 3" x 5" cards, Post-it notes, and so forth.
- Think of any students in your class you need to contact ahead of time to secure their permission to use personal stories or to get them to share their personal testimonies.
- Outline each lesson plan in your own words or map it on your own paper so you will feel a sense of direction for each session.
- Pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit: (1) in the way you prepare; (2) in what you say in class; (3) in the way you respond to comments or questions by class members; (4) in the way you give time for the Spirit to speak to class members' hearts as the session progresses.

Using This Guide

This leader's guide is simply that—a guide. It suggests key points, lines of thought, discussion questions, personal reflection times, and a variety of other exercises to enhance your class time. Use the suggestions from this guide however you find them helpful, and devise your own plan if you wish. Expand the time devoted to activities you think will work well in your group, and feel free to delete activities you think may not work so well.

The key is to engage class members in material from the book and to help them find ways to apply it to their own lives. This study can change lives—not because the ideas from the book are so unique or rich, but because as the students read God's Word it will give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to direct them.

I designed this study guide to call attention to additional ideas and to enhance the thoughts expressed in the textbook and to encourage you to address certain concepts or discussion questions. I did not create an entire time-usage plan for each session. Rather, I have endeavored to furnish more

than enough material to work within the Bible, the textbook, and this leader's guide so that you can design your own lesson plan based on what works best for your group. Have fun with it!

I start many of the leader's guides with a "Background Check" where I place cross-referenced material from *Breaking Free from Sin's Grip*, *Coffee Shop Theology*, *More Coffee Shop Theology*, and *Dismantling the Myths*. Reading this material, along with the material in the Bible study books, furnishes plenty of information to lead a lively group discussion.

Each study is filled with references to Scripture. It may not be possible, given your time limitations, to read all of the passages aloud during each week's study session. However, provide opportunity during each group session to read some scriptures aloud. God enlivens His Word to the hearts of hearers better when it is read aloud than when we simply refer to it by chapter and verse. Assuming everyone will have studied the weekly focus scripture thoroughly before coming to the study session, this should be a time of review for everyone.

Each study has several sections of "Group Discussion." Encourage class members to write their thoughts as they read the material prior to coming to the Bible study session. If the space provided is not adequate for members to record their thoughts, encourage them to write their responses in a notebook. A three-ring binder works well and allows class members to add new material as desired. Remind the participants to bring their notebooks with them when they come to class and to be prepared to share their answers with the entire group.

Each study also has space devoted to "Personal Reflection." These questions and exercises are more private. Never call on a class member to publicly give his or her response to one of these exercises or you may share your own answers to these questions. Take care to not embarrass class members by asking for more information than their comfort levels allow.

Each study has at least one "Group Activity." These are important to encourage your group members to interact with one another in different ways and should be fun and lively. You can make the activities competitive or a group project. Either way, encourage everyone to participate. Participants will remember more of what they have studied if they go over the material in class in unique ways and take an active part.

Each study closes with a section called "For Further Study." Here's your opportunity to cross-reference the Scripture lesson for the week with other passages in the Bible. Please remind folks that the themes we study are not simply found in one location in the Bible. They are themes that thread their way throughout Scripture. Martin Luther taught the important Bible study method of letting Scripture interpret Scripture. That is, one of the best ways to learn the meaning of a passage of Scripture is to read other scriptures that discuss the same topic. Many study Bibles use this approach. Teach your class members to use this method of Bible study and apply it to this Bible study series.

Remember to take time at the end of each study for students to write additional questions or discussion ideas on 3" x 5" cards and place them in the Odds and Ends box. You'll discuss these questions at the end of each book in this series of studies.

Presentation Ideas

One of the keys to good discussion is variety. Don't always present material from the book in lecture form, and don't always conduct a discussion by asking a question for the group to answer.

There are a variety of presentation ideas throughout the study series that can usually be found in the Group Activity section. If you find that your group responds well to certain activities, make a note of these and use them again from time to time. Just don't wear out a good activity through overuse!

The following is a list of suggestions of group activities.

1. If you wish to use an alternate method to simply having an open-group discussion, you might give each class member two or more (depending on the number of questions being answered) large Post-it notes. Ask group members to write their answers to your questions on their Post-it notes. Then, let them stick their answers on a large piece of poster board with the main idea of the question written on it. You may also simply write the main idea of the question on a chalk or white board and post their responses below it. The leader can then read all of the answers and lead a discussion.
2. Divide your students into small groups—one group for each question you will ask. Assign each group one of the questions. Allow discussion time, then let each small group present its answer to the larger body.
3. Give each class member two 3" x 5" cards. Ask them to write their answers to the questions in a particular section on each of these cards and drop their cards in a basket or box. Read each answer out loud and lead a discussion from students' answers.
4. Take two sheets of paper and type a sentence starter on each of them. An example of a sentence starter is "The most important idea I learned from this passage of Scripture is . . ." Have your class members sit in two rows. Pass one sheet down each row and have students write their personal answers to the question coming down their row. Collect the two sheets and read the responses.
5. Put the four key words of your Bible study for the week in large letters across the top of a whiteboard at the front of the classroom. Give each class member four Post-it notes. Ask them to write the way each of these concepts applies to their hearts or lives on their Post-it notes. When everyone has finished writing, have class members place their Post-it notes under the words on the board to which they apply. Read all responses.
6. One week before this class session, ask four class members to serve on a panel to present their answers to a particular section of questions. Give them the questions in advance so they can prepare their responses. During class time, you read the questions and let panel members answer them.
7. An alternate method to having a whole-group discussion on a particular subject such as "consecration" is to place the words "Reasons I should consecrate" in a circle in the middle of a large piece of poster board. Then draw six lines out from the circle like spokes on a bicycle wheel. On another sheet of poster board place the words "Difficulties to consecration" in a circle in the middle. Draw six lines out from the circle as you did before. Divide your class into two groups and have them write responses to these questions on the lines coming from the circle. You, as the group leader, can then read all of the responses at the conclusion of the exercise.
 - a. The most important reason I should consecrate myself to God is . . .
 - b. The most difficult thing about consecrating to God is . . .

8. A good visual aid for the material in a particular lesson can assist in your presentation of it. For example, place each of the five key words describing the Holy Spirit on five large sheets of poster paper. Place one word at the top of each sheet. List the concepts that explain each word under the key words. Use a different color marker for each key word. Tape these to a chalkboard or on the wall for presentation. You may also do the same thing with a PowerPoint presentation using a computer and projector.
9. Rather than lecturing on the week's material, present the information in the form of the *Jeopardy* television game show. Begin reading characteristics of one of the key concepts. Have students raise their hands when they think they know which one you are talking about. They answer in the form of a question, such as, "What is a bush?" [the thing that caught Moses' attention in the desert].
10. This takes a little extra work, but it brings variety to your presentation. Write 10 questions and answers from your presentation material. Type a question on a note card; type the answer on another note card. Do this 10 times for each question and answer. You may also position the questions and answers in sections on your computer screen, print as many sets as you need onto card stock paper and cut them out. Shuffle the cards and let the Bible study group match the questions with the correct answers. It's more fun to make two sets, divide the class into two groups, and see which group can complete the activity first.

Living in a Community of Faith

Background Check

Read chapter 16 in *More Coffee Shop Theology* in preparation for this week's study. In looking back over more than a decade of published material on Christian living, I realize that I have often approached the subject from the perspective of "Jesus and me," incorrectly thinking in terms of the solitary nature of the Christian journey. That certainly is an element of the Christian walk, but it's not the only one. In this book I now hope to emphasize the *corporate* nature of faith.

Preparing for This Study

After presenting the general introductory material at the beginning of this study, spend time with each of the questions on page 6. Talk about examples of people who go off on tangents or get sidetracked from the central message of the gospel by refusing the direction and correction of the Christian community.

For example, a man attends our church occasionally who spends his entire life promoting a strange interpretation about Jesus. No one in the Christian and Jewish faith agrees with him. Our pastor and other Christian leaders in the congregation have talked with him extensively about the errors in his thinking. He refuses to receive direction from others. Instead, he has ventured out on his own and cut himself off from the larger Christian body. What a waste of time and energy!

As you analyze the material in Acts 2:42-27 on pages 6 through 8, try to think of ways the Christian community functions today in these same ways. Remember that even though customs, clothes, hairstyles, and technology change with the times, the basic human needs for worship, fellowship, instruction, and prayer do not change. Our hearts crave the same things the hearts of early believers needed.

Take a moment at the conclusion of the session to encourage class participants to place their unanswered questions on 3" x 5" note cards, along with this session number. They should then place their cards in an Odds and Ends Box provided by the Bible study leader. Attention will be given to these questions in the last session of this study.

Close your session with prayer.

Living with the Saints

Preparing for This Study

Use your introductory time for this study making the case that humans are hardwired for social interaction. I've given a couple of examples in the text. You and your class members can probably think of others. Then make the connection that this is also true of our spiritual natures. We need to get together to talk about God and our relationships with Him.

Reemphasize the concept at the bottom of page 12 that being the temple of God means we are separated *from* something and separated *for* something.

I briefly make reference to the image of our holiness being a *reflected* holiness, like a mirror reflection, at the bottom of page 12. Take a minute to talk about that with your class. It is easy to identify the source of light in a candle, flashlight, or lamp. That is not the case with a mirror. The mirror does nothing to generate light; it merely passes on the image it receives. We don't generate our own holiness from an angelic heart. We live in daily relationship with God and reflect a holiness that comes from Him. We are only a channel through which He flows.

Spend extra time with question 2 on page 13. Believers need to realize that God actually meets with us in different ways in corporate worship than He does in our private devotions. Both are necessary for a well-rounded Christian life.

Study together 1 Pet. 2:9-10 at the bottom of page 13. This is a fascinating passage of Scripture. Peter gleans these images from the Old Testament and applies them to those of us who live in the new covenant. Take plenty of time to explore these concepts with your class and develop the rich meaning that flows from them. These images will change the way you think about believers in the Christian Church.

As you look at the bottom of page 14, ask your class if you are going to become part of the kingdom of God when you die and go to heaven, or are you part of that Kingdom now? These passages of Scripture indicate the latter. How extreme! We're members of God's kingdom, right here, right now. Give attention to the two questions on page 15. They're both important.

The questions on pages 16 and 17 are important as well. They explore the concept of body life in the community of faith. Call attention to the picture on the cover of this book. Relate how a team of individuals must work together to negotiate the white waters of river rafting. Everyone has a function; everyone does his or her part. The same is true in the Christian community.

This is another example of the Christian life being like an extreme sport. Sometimes it seems easier to do things yourself rather than to be part of a group trying to function well together. However, like it or not, we're team members together on this journey to heaven. It's a bit radical and it's a lot of work, but we simply must find ways to work together on this journey of faith.

Close your session with prayer.

Living with Less-than-Perfect Saints

Preparing for This Study

I love my two brothers and my sister as well as my mom and dad. However, during my adolescent years of growing up together, my siblings often got on my nerves. I especially hated to take road trips with them. We fought over where we would sit in the car, what we played on the radio, and what games we would play—just like most kids fight on trips today. By the time we reached our destination, we were about ready to kill each other!

Sometimes our trips to heaven with saints in our churches seem a lot like that. We love each other, but we get on one another's nerves. Even at church, some of the folks drive us crazy. Use this Bible study to help your class members come to terms with this reality. Holiness can smooth a lot of rough edges in our personalities, but it doesn't solve all of our personality differences. Use the questions on pages 18 through 19 to explore students' feelings and thoughts on this subject.

The questions on page 20 will help you open discussion on the comparison of clay jars to our human frailties. Give students an opportunity to compare themselves with Paul in the personal reflection questions on page 21. Since this is a personal reflection, don't ask class members to share their answers. However, you might contact one or two students prior to class and invite them to share their personal testimonies of how they relate to Paul's testimony and how the Lord sees them through.

Spend ample time with the presentation material at the bottom of page 21. I'm not excusing carnality in this paragraph—there's no place for carnality in the community of faith. However, when you factor in all of the differences mentioned here, you can see why we don't always see eye to eye or perfectly agree.

I'm hoping your class members will gain new insight and spiritual strength from the Group Activity on page 22. This exercise calls attention to really important principles of traveling the Christian journey together. When you finish with the four questions, ask the question at the bottom of the page and encourage everyone to participate. Answers to this question should draw the material of the entire Bible study together.

Your group will also benefit from a discussion of the questions on pages 23 and 24. Develop a list as suggested in question 5. Type the list and distribute it to class members next week. Add to the list as class members think of additional concepts through the remainder of the Bible study series.

Close your session with prayer.

Living with Temptation

Preparing for This Study

The discussion questions on page 26 are a good introduction to this study. Every observation regarding temptation in this study is followed by one or more group discussion questions or a personal reflection activity, so there is ample material to lead an interesting discussion.

I've found it hard over the years to explain point 3 on page 27 to my college students. Most do not understand the difference between temptation coming from a person's inner being and a temptation coming from the outside. This is an important distinction. Ask your class members to list the many sources of temptation that come from the environment. The list could include billboards, magazines, television, radio, music, friends, and so forth. Help the participants see that they cannot isolate themselves from outward sources of temptation. However, they *can* maintain a pure heart toward God. Remember the old adage: "You can't keep the devil from flying over your head, but you don't have to let him build a nest in your hair." The two questions on page 28 will also help you make this point.

With regard to point 4 on page 28, Satan will try to convince people that they are the only ones being tempted in this way. He then urges them to yield because they are already failures in some way or because they are powerless to resist this temptation for the long haul. Don't believe either lie!

Pay particular attention to points 6 and 7 on page 29 and the discussion questions that go along with these points. People often forget these important points. Temptation is limited in its scope, and we can win and keep the victory over it. God promises that as we pray in search of victory over temptation, He will answer us. So, wait before Him in prayer much like you wait by the phone for a call from your doctor, family member, or minister who calls with an answer to an important question. Whatever you do, don't try to win the battle on your own. You're not strong enough in your own ability. You are strong enough, however, in the power of the Spirit who works within you.

Notice the victory of point 8—you can still be standing when the winds of temptation die down. Say to yourself in the midst of temptation, "This, too, shall pass," and hold on to God's promise. Christ is our example of victory.

For a discussion of point 9 on page 31, brainstorm a list of things we can do to flee temptation before it comes our way. For example, if a person is tempted with drinking alcohol, he or she should stay away from places where it may be easily obtained. If a person is tempted to spend the family's grocery money on unnecessary purchases, he or she should not regularly carry money, a checkbook, or credit cards. I have a friend who used to stop at a pornography store on his way home from work. He resisted the temptation by making himself accountable to his wife. He called her as he left the of-

face at the end of the day. She knew how long it should take him to get home, and he had to answer to her if the trip home took too long.

List on a sheet of paper all of the strategies your class members give in the group activity on page 31. Type the list up and give it to the class next week.

Remember to allow time at the end of the session for additional questions to be added to the Odds and Ends box.

Close your session with prayer.

Living with Trials

Preparing for This Study

Begin this study by making a clear distinction between last week's study on temptation and this week's study on trials. Name all of the ways they differ. Make sure every class member knows the differences between them.

If you can, think of a personal illustration from your own life as examples of the four positive conclusions that trials can have on our lives as listed on page 34. You will have an opportunity with the group exercise on page 36 to call on class members to give their testimonies of examples from their lives.

Even though the questions on page 35 are personal reflection questions, talk to a class member ahead of the class session and see if he or she will share responses to these questions regarding a personal trial.

The concept of double-mindedness discussed on page 36 is an extremely important one. James gives us a great image of a person being pulled in two directions at once. Think of examples from life that illustrate why double-mindedness isn't a wise way to live. For example, yoke a racehorse and a farm horse together, and you will have a real problem. Pair a messy person with a clean freak for a roommate and see what happens. Now compare that with a believer who wants to serve God fully but at the same time have his or her own way. It just doesn't work. The questions on pages 36 and 37 will help you explore this concept further.

We've all seen pictures of the victory celebration at the ancient Olympic Games. Winners received a wreath made from a green vine. That's the picture James sees as he images our ultimate victory in heaven at the end of earth's trials. Give your class ample time to discuss each of the questions on page 38. Relate our victory over trials to our hope of heaven.

Allow time at the end of the study session to place unanswered questions in the Odds and Ends box.

Close your session with prayer.

Living in a World That Doesn't Make a Place for God

Background Check

Read chapter 9 in *Dismantling the Myths*.

Preparing for This Study

At some point in this week's lesson, spend time talking about the ways Christians are resident aliens in this world. We live and work here, but we really don't belong here because this is not our true home. This is a rich and meaningful concept for believers to remember as they live on this earth.

I was especially fascinated by John's use of the phrase "children of God." As I said on page 40, Paul used the term "sons of God" to pick up on the idea of our being adopted by God. John, on the other hand, emphasized the concept of our actual royal bloodline to God. Awesome! Discuss this with your group by using the questions at the top of page 41.

At the bottom of page 41, you are reminded once again of the Bible's frequent connection between holiness and heaven. Do a word search with a Bible computer program and see how often these two words connect in Scripture. A holy life leads us toward heaven, and thoughts of heaven spur us on to holy living.

The material on pages 42 and 43 is extremely important. Make sure class members grasp its importance. John addresses the contradiction of God's saints living sinful lifestyles. The two thoughts are mutually exclusive. So often in today's church world, believers want to make excuses for sinful choices. They talk as though sin is an unfortunate inevitability. "Never," says John.

Often in his writing John gives only two options, as he does here. It's either black or white, not a shade of gray. We're either citizens of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan. Along with this distinction, make sure your class members understand and can state in their own words the difference between the inability of a believer to sin and the ability not to sin (question 6, page 44). Much misunderstanding has resulted from those who did not discern this difference. It is dangerous to think that believers do not have the ability to sin once they sell out to God. If we don't guard ourselves against sin, we're sure to fall into it.

Spend as much time as you can with the questions on page 44. They are all important.

Think of examples of how "the media bring us stories every day that remind us of our alien status" as I say toward the bottom of page 45. Moral debates in the news often remind me of this as I hear media spokespeople tell me how I must be tolerant of all moral choices and lifestyles. I'm reminded that *I just don't fit well in this culture*.

Allow time at the end of the study for class members to write additional questions for the Odds and Ends box.

Close your session with prayer.

Looking In and Reaching Out

Preparing for This Study

Call attention to the statement at the bottom of page 46 that analyzes the Beatitudes. The first three turn our look inward and the fourth gives us the essence of holiness. The last four turn our look outward toward others. That's a good outline for living our lives. First, we look inward and center ourselves in God's will, then we look outward to share God's gift of grace with others.

Spend time exploring each of the first three beatitudes with the questions on pages 47 and 48. It's important that class members grasp the subtle insights of each of these eight beatitudes. Together they form a beautiful picture of a believer blessed by God.

The personal reflection questions on page 49 can also be used for general discussion of the holiness beatitude. Draw attention to the fact that we should crave righteousness as much as we crave food and water.

A good way to highlight the last three beatitudes is to think of people you and class members know who exemplify these virtues. Real-life examples will make the point better than simply discussing general principles.

The group activity at the bottom of page 51 draws attention to an extremely important principle of the spiritual world: Living for God and doing good can be hazardous to your health! It got Jesus killed. Spend plenty of time with the questions, and make sure everyone understands why this disconnection is a reality.

Get your group to list the qualities of salt and light in the discussion questions on page 52. Save these lists; you'll use them when as we discuss this same passage in book 4.

Allow time at the conclusion of this study session for class members to write out questions for the Odds and Ends box.

Close your session with prayer.

Really Caring

Preparing for This Study

This notion of living under grace rather than law is sometimes misunderstood in such a way that it cheapens our understanding of grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer referred to such ideas as “cheap grace.” By that he meant people take God’s grace for granted by living any way they want and then asking God’s forgiveness for their wrongdoing. A man in my church recently said to me, “I’ll just do what I want, then ask God to forgive me.” That’s premeditated rebellion against God that cheapens His grace offer to us.

Examples of ceremonial law with question 1 at the bottom of page 54 might include the rituals associated with religious feasts. Civil law (also on page 54) might include regulations regarding the way people were to treat widows, aliens, and poor people. The Book of Leviticus contains dozens of examples of both types of laws. Check them out in Leviticus before the class session.

Question 3 at the top of page 55 refers specifically to the Ten Commandments. Be careful with question 4. I’ve gotten myself into trouble more than once with this question! Sometimes people will want to find ways to make lifestyle directives set forth by the Christian community into human interpretations. You know why! They want to disregard them. We cannot make them go away that easily. Many times these lifestyle directives reflect the corporate conscience of the Christian community. We need to listen carefully to the conscience of the church and not strike out on our own in such matters.

Question 5 gives you an opportunity to highlight the way the New Testament Church responds to the various types of Old Testament law. Make sure class members do not allocate disregard for ceremonial law to a neglect of moral law. That would lead to a tragic misunderstanding of the New Testament’s use of Old Testament law.

Give special attention to the comments in pages 55 and 56 regarding Matt. 5:20. Especially important is the sentence toward the end of that section that says, “our holiness results more from practicing the presence of God in our lives and enjoying vital fellowship with Him than it does from following a prescribed set of rules, as the Pharisees did.”

Too many people equate holiness with following a to-do list of good deeds and staying away from a list of sinful practices. It’s true that our lifestyle reflects our commitment to Christ. However, that lifestyle does not make us holy in and of itself. Lifestyle is a by-product of our relationship with God. If we miss the relationship element, we fall into the same trap the Pharisees fell into.

Pay particular attention to questions 3 and 4 on page 57. They offer important insights for this Bible study.

With regard to the discussion of Matt. 5:21-32, you may spend as much time as possible dis-

cussing the reasons Jesus discourages such practices as gossip, character assassination, sexual fanatizing, and divorce. But, don't get so caught up in these actions that you miss the thrust of the passage. Jesus calls our attention to the motives and intentions of our hearts.

God's interest in our heart motive and intention is a central feature of a proper understanding of holiness. We're again reminded that it's never so simple as following a prescribed list of actions. God looks much deeper than actions to the wellspring of our hearts. Each of the questions on pages 58 and 59 calls attention to various features of this passage of Scripture.

Use the material in the conclusion to make the connection between the way we think in our hearts and community holiness. The final group activity on page 60 draws attention to the last sentence of the conclusion. This is an important Christian principle. Encourage your class members to memorize it and repeat it often.

Close your session with prayer.

Not in Public

Preparing for This Study

This Bible study exemplifies a time when living as God calls us to live is not like participating in an extreme sport. Extreme sports enthusiasts have an element of showmanship about them. They love to do daring feats for the camera or an audience. They call attention to their abilities or skills. Today's Bible study reminds us that we are not to call attention to ourselves and our accomplishments. The righteous deeds mentioned here are not for audience approval.

The personal reflection questions on pages 61 and 62 are probably too personal for group discussion. However, you may wish to share a story from your own personal life to illustrate the point. Take care that no one is made to feel embarrassed by being asked to share more than he or she is comfortable sharing with the group.

Questions 3 through 5 at the top of page 63 get at an important spiritual concept. We must guard not only against doing the right things for the wrong reasons but also against self-deception. How do we deceive ourselves, and why can we do it so easily?

If you have time, ask class members to give examples of other times Jesus used exaggeration to make a point, as He did in Matt. 6:3. Don't spend too much time on this, but it is an interesting discussion.

From the examples Jesus gives in this Bible study, we can see that God loves simplicity. Why? Also, why does God not want us to call attention to our righteous deeds?

Question 1 at the top of page 65 is particularly interesting. We all know people who use a certain tone of voice and sometimes even a different vocabulary when they pray. Only God judges the heart, so we'd best not judge their motives. However, we can ask ourselves to whom we are praying when we're asked to pray in public. Unfortunately, we can easily fall into the trap of praying for public critique more than for God's approval.

Explore the positive value of fasting. Talk about the various forms it can take. That is, people sometimes fast one meal a week for a certain period of time. Or they may abstain from a list of certain foods for a time period. Perhaps they refrain from eating all food for a few days. Discuss with your group why people do this and what spiritual benefits can result from such discipline.

Close this session by again calling attention to the importance of the motives and desires that lie behind our actions. Then have prayer.

Golden Rules for Holy Living

Preparing for This Study

Every single concept in Jesus' sermon is vital to our Christian walk. However, it was necessary to limit the presentation to the material found in these studies. If you have time, discuss with your group the important material in Matt. 6:19-34, which I did not consider.

Today's study considers some of Jesus' golden rules. The reason I presented the group activity at the beginning of the study is because there's too much material in this study for the entire group to consider together. Therefore, I have divided your group into four teams and given each of them a specific section to study and report on.

In the presentation of answers to the questions on pages 69 and 70 you might ask the entire group the following question: In what practical ways do we show that we are seeking God's kingdom first in our lives?

In the presentation of answers to the questions on pages 70 and 71 you might ask the entire group the following question: How are we frequently tempted to judge others and how do we best avoid this temptation?

In the presentation of answers to the questions at the bottom of page 71 you might ask the entire group the following questions:

1. How does this rule differ from the last one regarding not judging others?
2. How might God use you to prepare hearts to hear the gospel message?

When you present the material on page 72, call special attention to the ascending order strength of the words *ask*, *seek*, and *knock*. Why does Jesus do this in His presentation? What is He saying to us?

In the presentation of answers to the questions on pages 72 and 73 you might ask the entire group the following question: In what ways do you tangibly show that you place your total confidence and trust in your Heavenly Father?

In the presentation of answers to the questions on pages 73 and 74 you might ask the entire group the following question: What psychological benefits are there to making this a practice of life?

Close this session by asking the group what benefits accompany living a life by these golden rules. Then have prayer.

Three Sets of Two

Preparing for This Study

One thing all extreme sports have in common: They all require strict adherence to minute details. One extra foot of rope in a mountain climbers' hitch, a few seconds delay in leaving the snow ski chute, or a misjudged approach to the sports car ramp can lead to an accident or even death.

The introduction to this session notes the one different step early travelers took at the fork in the road near my house. But that one step led them thousands of miles in a different direction. Those small details are so important! In this Bible study, Jesus calls attention to small details.

You will find it easy to get a discussion started with question 1 on page 76. I have actually had groups take an hour to list lifestyle characteristics of travelers of the narrow way. You don't have that much time, but give the question ample attention. Question 2 is important too.

The questions on page 78 all relate to fruit inspection and its spiritual application. Make sure the discussion does not call negative attention to members of your congregation. Talk with the pastor if you anticipate any problems, and get advice on the best way to handle potential delicate situations. Keep the discussion focused on the subject and not particular individuals.

Jesus' illustration of building a house on different foundations gives you an opportunity to highlight the fact that there's a big difference between Christian believers and people who live good moral lives without Christ in their hearts. The issue with God is not good moral lives alone. The issue is the right foundation. Christ is God's only acceptable Foundation for building our spiritual lives. So if you're confronted, as I often am, with the question, "But what about my neighbor? He lives a very good life." Remind people that a good life is not enough. We need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to bring us into right standing with the Father.

Remember to give class members an opportunity to write out additional questions and place them in the Odds and Ends box.

Close your session with prayer.

Tying It All Together

Preparing for This Study

This is wrap-up time. If you have missed a week of study in the last three months, try and tie things together in one session. If you were able to meet each week, you then have the time to take two weeks with this material.

It's very possible that the material in this Bible study raised a lot of questions that need plenty of time for answers. Check your Odds and Ends box. This is the time to address those lingering questions. As I said in this guide at the end of books 1 and 2, it's better to take a little extra time now than to move on to the next study with haunting questions still lingering in your students' minds.

This study gives you a chance to do a quick review of some of the most significant scripture passages encountered over the past 11 weeks. Review the material, discuss the questions presented in this week's material, and answer student questions from the past 11 weeks. That should fill your time together easily.

After you have reviewed and clarified the material and all questions that students have raised, do the group activity found in the middle of page 87. This is an important wrap-up exercise.

Use the information in the "Moving On" section on page 87 to prepare your group for the study of book 4 in this series. This next study calls attention to the ministry and service components of holiness.

Close your session with prayer.