

ROMANSCHAPTEREIGHT

Climbing to a Place of Confident Faith

GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE

TOM HOLLADAY

GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE

ROMANSCHAPTEREIGHT: Take a journey together with your small group to greater faith! If you've ever had feelings like, "I'm not good enough," "I'm never going to change," or "Life is too hard," Romans eight is the chapter for you! Pastor Tom Holladay taught this video series beginning at the bottom and moving to the top of Saddleback Mountain through each of the four sessions to help us see clearly the journey from doubt to faith—from discouragement to hope—that God has for us.

Session 1: No Condemnation!

Session 2: No Frustration!

Session 3: No Desperation!

Session 4: No Separation!

ROMANSCHAPTEREIGHT

Great Chapters of the Bible is a video-based small group series that will take your group on a verse by verse study through some of the most life-changing truths in God's Word.

Each chapter of the Bible is great because God wrote it all. But there are certain chapters that speak to our hearts and minds in an especially deep way. So each volume in this series goes deep into one chapter to draw out the life-change that awaits us in these great passages.



Tom Holladay is a senior teaching pastor at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. He assists Rick Warren in teaching Purpose Driven Church conferences to Christian leaders around the world. He has written several books, including *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* and *Love-Powered Parenting*. Tom and his wife Chaundel have three children and six grandchildren.

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RELIGION / Christian Life / Personal Growth



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Climbing to a Place of Confident Faith

STUDY GUIDE

A Four Session, Video-Based Study for Small Groups or Individuals

GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

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Great Chapters of the Bible
Romans Chapter Eight: Climbing to a Place of Confident Faith
Small Group Study Guide
Edition 2.0

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR **STUDY GUIDE**

Here is a brief explanation of the features of this study guide.

LOOKING AHEAD/CATCHING UP: You will open each meeting with an opportunity for everyone to check in with each other about how you are doing with the weekly assignments. Accountability is a key to success in this study!

KEY VERSE: Each week you will find a key verse or Scripture passage for your group to read together. If someone in the group has a different translation, ask them to read it aloud so the group can get a bigger picture of the meaning of the passage.

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VIDEO LESSON: There is a video lesson for the group to watch together each week. Fill in the blanks in the lesson outlines as you watch the video, and be sure to refer back to these outlines during your discussion time.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS: Each video segment is complemented by several questions for group discussion. Please don't feel pressured to discuss every single question. There is no reason to rush through the answers. Give everyone ample opportunity to share their thoughts. If you don't get through all of the discussion questions, that's okay.

LIVING ON PURPOSE: In his book, *The Purpose Driven® Life*, Rick Warren identifies God's five purposes for our lives. They are worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism. We will focus on one of these purposes in each lesson, and discuss how they relate to the subject of the study. This section is very important, so please be sure to leave time for it.

PRAYER DIRECTION: At the end of each session you will find suggestions for your group prayer time. Praying together is one of the greatest privileges of small group life. Please don't take it for granted.

A Tip for the Host

The study guide material is meant to be your servant, not your master. The point is not to race through the sessions; the point is to take time to let God work in your lives. Nor is it necessary to “go around the circle” before you move on to the next question. Give people the freedom to speak, but don’t insist on it. Your group will enjoy deeper, more open sharing and discussion if people don’t feel pressured to speak up.



HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO **CURRICULUM**

Follow these simple steps for a successful small group meeting:

- Open your group meeting by using the Looking Ahead or Catching Up sections of your study guide.
- Watch the video lesson together and follow along in the outlines in this study guide. Each video lesson is about fifteen minutes long.
- Complete the rest of the discussion materials for each session. Be sure to review the Living on Purpose and commit to fulfilling any assignments before your next session.
- Close your time together by following the Prayer Direction suggestions.



SESSION 1: NO CONDEMNATION!

ROMANS 8:1–4

Looking Ahead

1. Take some time to go around the circle and get to know each other.
2. Are there any verses in Romans 8 that have been especially meaningful to you in your Christian walk?

Key Verse

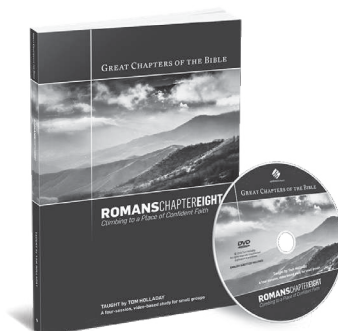
Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ROMANS 8:1 (NIV)

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:1–4

Bible Study

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in the outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.



NO CONDEMNATION!

We feel . . .	God says . . .	We have . . .
I'm not good enough	No condemnation	Liberty
I'm never going to change	No frustration	Victory
Life is too hard	No desperation	Expectancy
No one cares about me	No separation	Security

How do you deal with the “I’m not good enough” feeling:

You trust God’s _____ .

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ROMANS 8:1 (NIV)

1. God is not _____ with you.

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. PSALM 103:13–14 (NIV)

Session 1: No Condemnation!

Romans 8:1-4

2. God does not _____ you.

He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins, for his mercy toward those who fear and honor him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west.

PSALM 103:10-12 (TLB)

3. God does not _____ you.

For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance. PSALM 94:14 (NIV)

4. God does not _____
from you.

Who is this promised to?

ALL who are _____

In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. EPHESIANS 1:3 (NCV, emphasis added)

You trust God's _____ .

God's simple three part process:

- You _____ !
- God _____ !
- Here's _____ !

Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us . . .

ROMANS 8:2-4 (NIV)

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:1-4

The law of the _____

OVERCOMES

The law of _____

Discovery Questions

1. Verse 1: Which of these promises for the believer hits you at the deepest level ?

God is not angry

God does not punish

God does not reject

God does not remove his blessings

2. Verse 1: Do you ever feel like God is angry with you or out to punish you? Is it difficult in any way to accept the truth that there is no condemnation for us as believers in Jesus?

3. Verse 1: What does it mean to you to be "in Christ?"

Session 1: No Condemnation!

Romans 8:1-4

4. Verses 2-4: Do you ever find yourself trying to do through some "law" or "rule" what can only be done through Jesus?

Living on Purpose

EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP, MINISTRY, AND WORSHIP

Evangelism & Fellowship: Who do you know that needs to be encouraged with the truth of "no condemnation" right now? It might be someone who has not yet trusted in Christ's forgiveness who needs to know they can live a life of no condemnation, or it might be a believer who has gotten caught up in condemning themselves. Pray that God will give you an opportunity to share this message with someone this next week. This is good news worth passing on!

Prayer Direction

Ask for prayer requests from each person in the group that you can pray for during this study. As you pray, remember to thank God for the gift of "no condemnation" that he gives us through Christ.

ROMANSCHAPTER**EIGHT**

Romans 8:1-4

SESSION 2: NO FRUSTRATION!

ROMANS 8:4–17

Catching Up/Looking Ahead

1. Did you get a chance to share the message of “no condemnation” with someone this last week? How did they respond?
2. What items would you put on the top of a list of things that frustrate you because they take longer than they should?

Key Verse

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

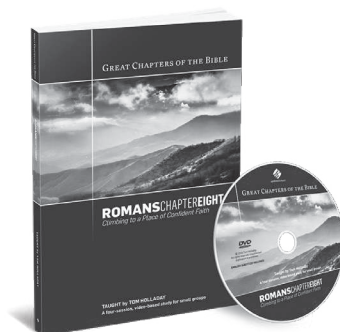
ROMANS 8:15 (NIV)

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:4–17

Bible Study

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in the outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.



NO FRUSTRATION!

You will change because . . .

You have a new _____ .

We . . .

Do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

ROMANS 8:4–8 (NIV)

FACT 1: You choose the _____ according to which you live.

FACT 2: Your choice determines your _____.

FACT 3: Your thinking determines your _____.

Thinking comes before _____

_____ comes before Thinking

Session 2: No Frustration!

Romans 8:4–17

You have a new _____ .

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. (ROMANS 8:8–13 NIV)

Control: Let go and let God

Ownership: The Spirit has you

Obligation: Not to sin but to the Spirit

You have a new _____ .

Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (ROMANS 8:14–17 NIV)

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Romans 8:4-17

By God's spirit we cry out: _____ .

- The Aramaic and the Greek words for father are side by side: _____ and _____ are both included.
- The formal and informal are side by side: _____ and _____ are both included.

Discovery Questions

1. Verses 4–7: What could you do to rely more on the Spirit and less on your own willpower in your battle to live as the Spirit desires?
2. Verses 4–7: What helps you to set your mind on what the Spirit desires for your life?
3. Verses 8–13: How does it impact you when you see the truth that living under your own control can never be pleasing to God?

Session 2: No Frustration!

Romans 8:4-17

4. Verses 14–17: What does it mean to you personally to call God Father? How about to call God Abba, or daddy?

Living on Purpose

WORSHIP

From verses 14–17: Pray to God as your “Abba, Father” this week by addressing him as “Abba, Father” in your prayers, by talking to him about your simplest needs and your deepest hurts and by thanking him that because of Jesus you are his child and his heir.

Enjoy your new nature this week by . . . taking time to thank God that you have a choice in your circumstances and temptations and relationships.

Prayer Direction

Start the prayers to God as your Abba Father in your group prayer time.

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Romans 8:4-17

SESSION 3: NO DESPERATION!

ROMANS 8:17–30

Catching Up/Looking Ahead

1. Talk about what it meant to you to pray to God as your Abba, Father this last week.

Key Verse

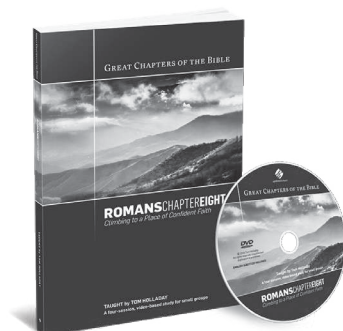
And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ROMANS 8:28 (NIV)

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:17-30

Bible Study

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in the outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.



NO DESPERATION!

You Will Suffer

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ROMANS 8:17–18 (NIV)

You can handle ANY problem when you remember . . .

1. Who to share your problems with:

- When you suffer, you share in the _____

2. What to compare your problems to:

- When you suffer, your present sufferings are _____ to your future glory.
- Two words describe where this glory will be revealed, _____

You Will Groan

ROMANS 8:19-27

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

1. _____ groans
2. _____ groan
3. _____ groans

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:17-30

You Will Grow

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

ROMANS 8:28-30 (NIV)

In all things
God works
for the good
of those who love him.

We know!

What good can problems work?

They make you like _____ !!!

Discovery Questions

1. Verses 17–18: What does it mean to you to “share in the sufferings” of Jesus? What do the words “weight of glory” picture for you?
2. Verses 19–37: Is there anything that you are having to wait for right now? How does the truth of God’s hope help you as you wait? How could your group pray for you as you wait?
3. Verses 19–27: Do you feel the freedom to groan as a follower of Jesus? How could you do some honest groaning?
4. Verses 28–30: How have you seen God working “all things together for his good” in your life?

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:17-30

Living on Purpose

DISCIPLESHIP

Take some time to read some verses about hope this week, asking God to give you new strength as you wait. Try finding them in an online concordance, and then share with each other some of the verses you've found at the beginning of your next meeting.

Stretch your faith this week by taking 15 minutes to dream about how God might transform one problem you're now facing into his glory.

If you've never memorized Romans 8:28, start on it this week.

Prayer Direction

Take some time as a group to talk about your specific prayer requests and to pray for one another, especially asking that God will give you hope as you wait.

SESSION 4: NO SEPARATION!

ROMANS 8:31–39

Catching Up/Looking Ahead

1. Share with each other some of the verses about hope that you found during this last week.

Key Verse

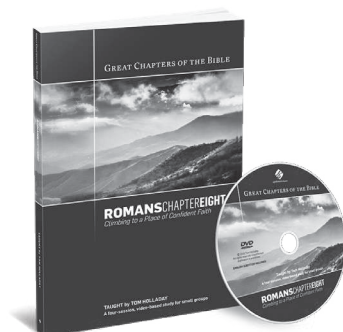
For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 8:38–39 (NIV)

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:31–39

Bible Study

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in the outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.



NO SEPARATION!

5 questions that lead to 5 unshakable assurances:

1. If God is for us, who can be against us?
2. He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?
3. Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.
4. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
5. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (ROMANS 8:31–35)

God is _____

God's personal love

I can conquer my fear of _____!

God will _____

God's liberal love

I can conquer my fear of _____!

Session 4: No Separation!

Romans 8:31-39

God will _____

God's merciful love

I can conquer my fear of _____ !

God will not _____

God's unconditional love

Four ways I know this to be true:

Jesus _____

Jesus _____

Jesus _____

Jesus _____

I can conquer my fear of _____ !

God will never _____

God's eternal love

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 8:35-39 (NIV)

I can conquer my fear of _____ !

Discovery Questions

1. Verse 31: Do you feel that God is on your side?
2. Verse 32: What do you think are some of the reasons many believers struggle with seeing God as miserly instead of as abundantly giving?
3. Verses 33–34: When in your life did you trust Jesus to forgive you and to no longer condemn you? If it was during this session, be sure to tell the group so they can pray for you!
4. Verses 35–39: What do you think might help you to be as convinced as Paul was that nothing can separate you from the love of God?

Living on Purpose

MINISTRY

Since God has given so much to us in Jesus, we are now set free to give to others. Who do you know that needs this week to experience . . . ?

- God's personal love
- God's liberal love
- God's merciful love
- God's unconditional love
- God's eternal love

Spend some time on the mountaintop of God's assurance this week. Take 10 minutes each morning or evening to read over these assurances once again. Look at your life and circumstances in light of these promises!

Prayer Direction

As you pray for one another's needs, also take time to specifically thank God for the truth of some of the verses in Romans 8. (For instance, "Thank you that you groan for us . . . thank you that you are using all things to work together for good in our lives . . . Thank you that nothing can separate us from your love . . .)

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

Romans 8:31–39

Diving Deeper

We encourage you to continue your study of Romans by visiting www.DriveTimeDevotions.com. You will find free audio podcast devotions from Pastor Tom Holladay that will take you through the entire book of Romans in about ten minutes a day, five days a week, studying one chapter each week. You can listen while you're getting ready in the morning, driving to work, or out for your morning exercise.

You will also find a free discussion guide that your group can use to continue your study of Romans. Just have your group members listen to DriveTime Devotions each day, and then talk about it together in your weekly meetings. It's simple. It's powerful. And it's absolutely free.

SMALLGROUPRESOURCES



HELP FOR HOSTS

TOP TEN IDEAS FOR NEW HOSTS

CONGRATULATIONS! As the host of your small group, you have responded to the call to help shepherd Jesus' flock. Few other tasks in the family of God surpass the contribution you will be making. As you prepare to facilitate your group, whether it is one session or the entire series, here are a few thoughts to keep in mind.

Remember you are not alone. God knows everything about you, and he knew you would be asked to facilitate your group. Even though you may not feel ready, this is common for all good hosts. God promises, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you" (HEBREWS 13:5 GNT). Whether you are facilitating for one evening, several weeks, or a lifetime, you will be blessed as you serve.

1. **DON'T TRY TO DO IT ALONE.** Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy team. If you can enlist a co-host to help you shepherd the group, you will find your experience much richer. This is your chance to involve as many people as you can in building a healthy group. All you have to do is ask people to help. You'll be surprised at the response.
2. **BE FRIENDLY AND BE YOURSELF.** God wants to use your unique gifts and temperament. Be sure to greet people at the door with a big smile . . . this can set the mood for the whole gathering. Remember, they are taking as big a step to show up at your house as you are to host a small group! Don't try to do things exactly like another host; do them in a way that fits you. Admit when you don't have an answer and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it and you'll sleep better at night.

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3. **PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETING AHEAD OF TIME.** Review the session and write down your responses to each question. Pay special attention to the Living on Purpose exercises that ask group members to do something other than engage in discussion. These exercises will help your group live what the Bible teaches, not just talk about it.
4. **PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP MEMBERS BY NAME.** Before you begin your session, take a few moments and pray for each member by name. You may want to review the Small Group Prayer and Praise Report at least once a week. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of each person in your group. Expect God to lead you to whomever he wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead.
5. **WHEN YOU ASK A QUESTION, BE PATIENT.** Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question. If silence doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else. After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple "thanks" or "great answer." Then ask, "How about somebody else?" or "Would someone who hasn't shared like to add anything?" Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who aren't ready to say, pray, or do anything. If you give them a safe setting, they will blossom over time. If someone in your group is a wallflower who sits silently through every session, consider talking to them privately and encouraging them to participate. Let them know how important they are to you—that they are loved and appreciated, and that the group would value their input. Remember, still water often runs deep.
6. **PROVIDE TRANSITIONS BETWEEN QUESTIONS.** Ask if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage. Don't call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud.

7. **BREAK INTO SMALLER GROUPS OCCASIONALLY.** With a greater opportunity to talk in a small circle, people will connect more with the study, apply more quickly what they're learning, and ultimately get more out of their small group experience. A small circle also encourages a quiet person to participate and tends to minimize the effects of a more vocal or dominant member.
8. **SMALL CIRCLES ARE ALSO HELPFUL DURING PRAYER TIME.** People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable trying it with just two or three others. Also, prayer requests won't take as much time, so circles will have more time to actually pray. When you gather back with the whole group, you can have one person from each circle briefly update everyone on the prayer requests from their subgroups. The other great aspect of subgrouping is that it fosters leadership development. As you ask people in the group to facilitate discussion or to lead a prayer circle, it gives them a small leadership step that can build their confidence.
9. **ROTATE FACILITATORS OCCASIONALLY.** You may be perfectly capable of hosting each time, but you will help others grow in their faith and gifts if you give them opportunities to host the group.
10. **ONE FINAL CHALLENGE (FOR NEW OR FIRST-TIME HOSTS).** Before your first opportunity to lead, read each of the six passages listed below as a devotional exercise to help prepare you with a shepherd's heart.

MATTHEW 9:36–38 (NIV)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

JOHN 10:14–15 (NIV)

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

1 PETER 5:2–4 (NIV)

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

PHILIPPIANS 2:1–5 (NIV)

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ.

HEBREWS 10:23–25 (NIV)

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7–8, 11–12 (NIV)

But we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. . . . For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long will this group meet?

This study is four sessions long. We encourage your group to add a fifth session for a celebration. In your final session, each group member may decide if he or she desires to continue on for another study. At that time you may also want to do some informal evaluation, discuss your group guidelines, and decide which study you want to do next. We recommend you visit our website at www.Pastors.com for more video-based small group studies.

Who is the host?

The host is the person who coordinates and facilitates your group meetings. In addition to a host, we encourage you to select one or more group members to lead your group discussions. Several other responsibilities can be rotated, including refreshments, prayer requests, worship, or keeping up with those who miss a meeting. Shared ownership in the group helps everybody grow.

Where do we find new group members?

Recruiting new members can be a challenge for groups, especially new groups with just a few people, or existing groups that lose a few people along the way. We encourage you to use the Circles of Life diagram on page 45 of this study guide to brainstorm a list of people from your workplace, church, school, neighborhood, family, and so on. Then pray for the people on each member's list. Allow each member to invite several people from their list. Some groups fear that newcomers will interrupt the intimacy that members have built over time. However, groups that welcome newcomers generally gain strength with the infusion of new blood. Remember, the next person you add just might become a friend for eternity. Logistically, groups find different ways to add members. Some groups remain permanently open, while others choose to open periodically, such as at the beginning or end of a study. If your group

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becomes too large for easy, face-to-face conversations, you can subgroup, forming a second discussion group in another room.

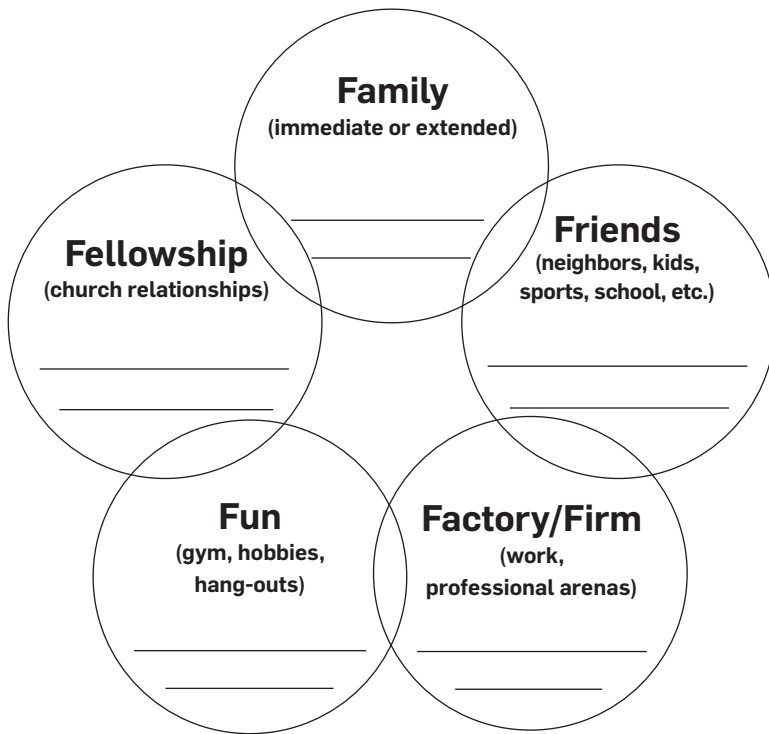
How do we handle the childcare needs in our group?

Childcare needs must be handled very carefully. This is a sensitive issue. We suggest you seek creative solutions as a group. One common solution is to have the adults meet in the living room and share the cost of a baby sitter (or two) who can be with the kids in another part of the house. Another popular option is to have one home for the kids and a second home (close by) for the adults. If desired, the adults could rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson for the kids. This last option is great with school-age kids and can be a huge blessing to families.

CIRCLES OF LIFE SMALL GROUP **CONNECTIONS**

Discover Who You Can Connect in Community

Use this chart to help carry out one of the values in the Group Guidelines, to "Welcome Newcomers."



Follow this simple three-step process:

1. List one to two people in each circle.
2. Prayerfully select one person or couple from your list and tell your group about them.
3. Give them a call and invite them to your next meeting. Over fifty percent of those invited to a small group say, "Yes!"

GROUP GUIDELINES

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend you discuss your guidelines during Session 1 in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group.

We agree to the following values:

CLEAR PURPOSE	To grow healthy spiritual lives by building a healthy small group community
GROUP ATTENDANCE	To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late)
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes)
BE CONFIDENTIAL	To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	To avoid gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matthew 18:15–17
SPIRITUAL HEALTH	To give group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God

Small Group Resources

LIMIT OUR FREEDOM

To limit our freedom by not serving or consuming alcohol during small group meetings or events so as to avoid causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble
(1 CORINTHIANS 8:1–13; ROMANS 14:19–21)

WELCOME NEWCOMERS

To invite friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly

OTHER

We have also discussed and agree on the following items:

CHILD CARE

STARTING TIME

ENDING TIME

If you haven't already done so, take a few minutes to fill out the Small Group Calendar on page 50.

SMALL GROUP PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other’s requests for prayer. You can also make a note when God answers a prayer. Pray for each other’s requests. If you’re new to group prayer, it’s okay to pray silently or to pray by using just one sentence:

“God, please help _____ to _____.”

DATE	PERSON	PRAYER REQUEST	PRAISE REPORT

Small Group Resources

DATE	PERSON	PRAYER REQUEST	PRAISE REPORT

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SMALL GROUP CALENDAR

Healthy groups share responsibilities and group ownership. It might take some time for this to develop. Shared ownership ensures that responsibility for the group doesn't fall to one person. Use the calendar to keep track of social events, mission projects, birthdays, or days off. Complete this calendar at your first or second meeting. Planning ahead will increase attendance and shared ownership.

DATE	LESSON	LOCATION	FACILITATOR	SNACK OR MEAL
	Session 1			
	Session 2			
	Session 3			
	Session 4			
	Celebration			

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Ephesians Chapter One: Discover Your Spiritual Blessings

Taught by Tom Holladay

Ephesians Chapter One is all about our identity in Christ and the spiritual blessings that are ours because of Jesus Christ. As Pastor Tom Holladay helps us discover the meaning and application of these truths, we know you will agree that this truly is a great chapter of the Bible!



You Make Me Crazy

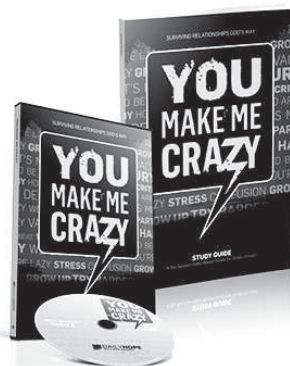
Taught by Rick Warren

We all have relationships that drive us crazy. Whether it's a boyfriend or girlfriend, spouse, sibling, parent, co-worker, or a relative you see once a year on a holiday, a crazy-maker can really make life difficult.

This six-week video study from Rick Warren will help bring sanity to your relationships so you can do more than just coexist. Learn how to connect with the crazy-makers in your life through these six sessions:

- Session 1: How to Be Wise in Relationships
- Session 2: Who's Pushing Your Buttons?
- Session 3: How to Resolve Conflict
- Session 4: Breaking Free From Abuse
- Session 5: Escaping the People-Pleaser Trap
- Session 6: Keeping the Crazy-Makers From Making You Crazy

Use the study guide to follow along with the DVD lessons. Write down the teaching points, read the related Scripture, make notes, and use the engaging discussion questions to help your group make the most of these difficult relationships.



To Order Small Group Studies and Other Resources Go to:
www.Pastors.com

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ANSWER KEY

Session 1

YOU TRUST GOD'S PROMISE

1. God is not ANGRY with you
2. God does not PUNISH you
3. God does not REJECT you
4. God does not REMOVE HIS BLESSINGS from you

All who are "IN CHRIST"

YOU TRUST GOD'S PROCESS

You CAN'T! God CAN! Here's HOW!

The law of the SPIRIT OF LIFE overcomes the law of SIN AND DEATH

Session 2

YOU HAVE A NEW NATURE!

Fact 1: You choose the POWER according to which you live.

Fact 2: Your choice determines your THINKING.

Fact 3: Your thinking determines your LIFE.

Thinking comes before DOING
BEING comes before Thinking

YOU HAVE A NEW POWER

YOU HAVE A NEW FATHER

By God's Spirit we cry out: ABBA, FATHER

The Aramaic and the Greek words for father are side by side: JEW and GENTILE are both included.

The formal and informal are side by side: INTIMACY and AUTHORITY are both included.

Session 3

When you suffer, you share in the SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

When you suffer, your present sufferings are NOT WORTH COMPARING to your future glory.

Two words describe where this glory will be revealed: IN US.

1. ALL CREATION groans
2. WE groan
3. THE SPIRIT groans

What good can problems work? They make you like JESUS!!!

Session 4

GOD IS FOR US

I can conquer my fear of OPPOSITION!

GOD WILL GIVE TO US

I can conquer my fear of PROVISION!

GOD WILL FORGIVE US

I can conquer my fear of ACCUSATION!

GOD WILL NOT CONDEMN US

Jesus DIED

Jesus LIVES

Jesus SITS AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND

Jesus INTERCEDES

I can conquer my fear of CONDEMNATION!

GOD WILL NEVER LEAVE US

I can conquer my fear of SEPARATION!

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Key Verses (cut out to carry with you and memorize)

Session 1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ROMANS 8:1 (NIV)

Session 2

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ROMANS 8:15 (NIV)

Session 3

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ROMANS 8:28 (NIV)

Session 4

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 8:38–39 (NIV)



