

Who's Influencing You? Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. If you could have any superpower, which one would you choose and why?
2. If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Read the following passages: Judges 6:1-16; Judges 6:22-27; Judges 7:7-22

Gideon's story, found in Judges chapters 6 and 7, reveals the transformative power of accepting God's influence. The Israelites faced oppression under the hand of the Midianites, and needed deliverance. Despite their disobedience, God sends a prophet to remind them of His faithfulness and chooses Gideon, initially doubtful, to lead Israel's army. As Gideon's faith grew through encounters with God, he tore down false altars and led a small army to victory against the Midianites, showcasing the power and faithfulness of God.

This narrative isn't just about ancient history; it's an invitation for us today. It's about embracing a new God-defined identity, following His guidance, and making a real impact, even in the most impossible of circumstances. It's a reminder that faith and obedience lead to freedom and purpose. By being real and getting close to God, we can discover deep fulfillment in His plan for our lives.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

POINT 1: CULTURE & INFLUENCE

1. Have you ever struggled with seeking validation or recognition from others, only to feel empty or unfulfilled afterward? How do you cope with those feelings?
2. Consider the idea of being fully known by God, as described in Psalm 139:1. How does the concept of God knowing every part of you make you feel? Does it bring comfort or discomfort? Why?
3. Consider the various "idol gods" of our age mentioned (anxiety, identity issues, sexual perversion, addictions, the worship of self, self-destructive thought patterns, the idolatry of comfort, shame and the fear of really being known, among others). Which ones resonate with you personally? How have they impacted your relationship with yourself, others, and God?
4. Have you ever, or recently, experienced the tension between blending in with the culture around you and standing firm in your faith? How do you reconcile that tension?

5. Read Ephesians 6:10-12. Reflect on the concept of being spiritually equipped, as described in the text. How does the idea of putting on God's armor resonate with you in the context of navigating cultural influences and spiritual battles in your life today?

POINT 2: OUR IDENTITY

1. Consider the statement "The voices you believe will determine the future you experience." How does this idea reflect the power of influence in shaping our lives? How can prioritizing God's voice through Scripture impact our future trajectory and identity?

2. Do you currently struggle with seeing yourself as God sees you, or do you downplay your identity in certain areas of your life? How does this perspective impact your daily thoughts and actions? How are you working to overcome this?

3. Read Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and 1 Peter 2:9, which speak to our identity as believers. How do these verses reinforce the importance of aligning our identity with God's perspective rather than the world's?

4. How intentional are you about immersing yourself in God's Word to remind yourself of your true identity? What practices do you implement to ensure that you are regularly absorbing and applying biblical truths to your life?

POINT 3: OUR QUESTIONS

1. Consider the statement "questions are not obstacles to intimacy with God but pathways to deeper revelation and trust." How does this perspective challenge your approach to doubt and uncertainty in your relationship with God? What steps can you take to embrace questioning as a means of drawing closer to Him?

2. Consider any nudges or promptings you're sensing from God right now. Are there specific steps or actions you feel led to take, even though they may be accompanied by questions or doubts?

3. Have you ever experienced moments where God's answers didn't align with your expectations or desires? How did you process those responses, and what did you learn from the experience?

POINT 4: THE INSTRUCTION

1. Consider the analogy of cleaning up your house as a metaphor for spiritual renewal. What "altars" or areas of compromise do you need to address in your own life to create more space for God's presence and power?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 7:1 and reflect on the concept of consecration and purifying oneself from worldly influences. What specific changes or sacrifices do you feel prompted to make in order to align more closely with God's will?

3. Reflect on the importance of accountability and community in your spiritual journey. How do you currently cultivate accountability in your life, and what steps can you take to deepen these relationships?

POINT 5: THE IMPOSSIBLE

1. Reflect on a time when you faced a seemingly impossible situation. How did you rely on God's strength to overcome it? What did you learn about God's power in that experience?

2. Read Judges 7:16-22 & 2 Corinthians 4:8-9. Consider the metaphor of the clay jar and the treasure within it. What does this metaphor suggest about the relationship between our weaknesses and God's power? What aspects of your life feel fragile or vulnerable right now? How do you envision God's light shining through those broken places?

3. Read Romans 5:1-4. Consider the purpose of suffering and hardship from this passage. How does this challenge our conventional views of suffering, and what insights does it offer into God's redemptive work in our lives?

Pray