

# SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY

7 Principles for Spiritual Growth

## Facilitator's Guide for Recovery Groups

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Available for download at

[www.SpiritualDiscoveryBook.com/guide](http://www.SpiritualDiscoveryBook.com/guide)

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Dear Facilitator,

We are happy to share with you this facilitator's guide for *Spiritual Discovery – 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth*. This guide is a result of leading Spiritual Discovery groups for several years and leading bible classes for decades. We are not professional counselors and a Spiritual Discovery group meeting is not a counseling session. This is a guide for leading an effective study of *Spiritual Discovery*. Every group has its own strengths and weaknesses. This guide may need to be adjusted for your group.

There are 3 formats of this facilitator's guide. This is the RECOVERY GROUP format. This format is a more thorough way to study this book, and will take 30 weeks to complete. That is a big commitment for most people; however, spiritual growth takes time. The topics covered in these lessons are foundational for growth, and each one builds on the previous one. We encourage you to take the time to go through all the lessons.

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### STRUCTURE AND GUIDELINES

This format will take two meetings for each lesson. In the first meeting, you will read and discuss the lesson. In the second meeting, you will discuss and share your homework. Having two weeks for each lesson gives the group more time to process and discuss the material.

We encourage the participants to read the lesson before the first meeting, but wait to do the homework until after the group has met and discussed the lesson. Having the opportunity to read and discuss the lesson as a group before completing the homework will give the participants a broader understanding of the topic and perhaps help them uncover some valuable insights for themselves.

We recommend having separate men's and women's groups. The discussions are too personal to have men and women in the same group.

We allow 90 minutes for each meeting. We always start on time and end on time.

The most effective group size is 5 to 8 people. Participants benefit when others share what they are learning, but if the group gets too large, there will not be enough time for everyone to respond to the questions. If the group is smaller than 5 people, they will miss the benefit of a broader range of experiences.

You will find guidelines for your meetings on page 9 of *Spiritual Discovery*. The guidelines are to help create a safe and respectful atmosphere.

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## STARTING A NEW GROUP

If you are forming a new Recovery Group, it will be helpful to have a private conversation with each of the potential participants. Following are a few questions we ask:

- **“Why do you want to be a part of this group study?”**
    - Hopefully, the answer is “I want to grow,” or “I need to make some changes.”
    - Sometimes the answer is “My friend wants me to attend.”
    - It is important that every participant give their whole heart. If they feel pressured to come and their heart is not in it, they can struggle with attendance and doing the homework.
    - If they just want to observe, it will create an environment where other participants may not feel safe to share their personal experiences.
    - If someone’s heart is not in it, we ask them to wait until they are ready to fully participate.
  - **“What do you want to change or how do you want to grow?”**
  - **“Do you have an active addiction (drugs, alcohol, gambling, gaming, media, food, pornography or sex addiction, or \_\_\_\_\_)?”**
    - If they have an active addiction, we encourage them to have an accountability partner that they check in with daily and to consider being involved in a counseling program while they participate in this class. For pornography addictions, we also suggest that they consider installing accountability software (such as Covenant Eyes) on all their electronic devices.
    - If they are making progress in a program, we welcome them to our group.
  - **“Are you experiencing ongoing strife in a close relationship?”**
    - This question helps us be more aware of the challenges the individual is facing.
  - **“Will you be able to attend all the meetings and do the weekly homework?”**
    - They most likely will need to adjust their schedule to be able to attend every meeting and do their homework.
    - If they try to add *Spiritual Discovery* classes to their schedule without thinking through the commitment, they may begin to miss meetings or not complete the homework.
  - **“Do you have a daily time of study and prayer?”**
    - If they do not, we ask them to make a commitment to do so.
    - We ask the participants to use the *Spiritual Discovery* book for their daily study during the weeks of this class. There are many scriptures in each lesson that they can reflect upon and study that can reinforce that week’s focus.
  - **“Will you abide by the Guidelines for Group Meetings?”**
    - Read and discuss the Guidelines for Group Meetings on page 9 of *Spiritual Discovery*. It is especially important to emphasize the confidentiality of the discussions.
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## ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

These lessons are designed to be led by a facilitator who leads every meeting. The facilitator can be a participant who is also reading the book and doing the homework along with the rest of the class. Prior experience leading group bible studies is helpful but not required.

Tips for being a good facilitator:

- Be well prepared. Study the lesson and answer the discussion and homework questions ahead of each class. (If you have led these classes before, review the lesson and homework before each class.)

- Set an example of openness and humility and share how you are applying the material to your own life. (This doesn't mean you have to share first or that you must answer every question, but when you share, set an example of openness and humility.)
- Keep the group on task. Each lesson is important and they build on each other from week to week, so keeping everyone focused on the lesson will be beneficial.
- A facilitator must be patient and a good listener, but this does not mean you let someone monopolize the discussions. If they do, you must step in and respectfully redirect the discussion. (This is always a judgment call, but you will learn who in the group tends to get off track or monopolize the discussions. You may find it helpful to have a private discussion with the person. Often this is all that is needed.)
- If anyone in the group begins to offer advice to try to resolve someone's problem, remind them of the guideline of not giving advice. They can share their own experience in a similar situation, but they cannot give advice.
- There are several Discussion Questions throughout each lesson. Gauge how much time to allow for each question. Some questions are more personal and all the participants need to answer. Many questions don't need a response from everyone once the material is covered.
- Keep an eye on the clock. Starting and ending on-time shows respect for the participants and allows them to plan other activities after meetings. Don't let someone who is habitually late keep you from starting on time. (If someone is habitually late, have a private conversation with them about showing respect to the others in the group by being on time.)
- Do not give advice. It is not the facilitator's responsibility to "fix" anyone or take on the problems of the members. (We will explain more about this throughout the lessons.)
- If you are concerned about a participant's safety or well-being, you can privately recommend that they seek professional help.

**Note:** If this is your first group to lead, you will find it helpful to have someone you can trust for spiritual advice when you feel you need more guidance.

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## MEETING FORMAT

### **1. Begin your meetings by reading the Guidelines for Group Meetings (page 9 of Spiritual Discovery).**

- These guidelines help create a safe and respectful atmosphere.
- If at some point, you feel the group is familiar enough with the guidelines, you can abbreviate this step by highlighting one or two of them. It is especially important to mention number 7 about confidentiality.
- If someone in the group is not complying with a guideline, a gentle reminder may be all that is necessary. If that is not enough, speak with them individually about it.

### **2. Lead the group in a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**

- You will find examples of meditations at the end of this guide (pages 21-22). You can give a copy of these meditations to the participants.
- This time of meditation will help the participants clear their minds and be more focused. Learning to sit quietly before God takes practice.
- This may be a new practice for you or the participants in the group. Often participants find it challenging to quiet their minds and meditate on a Bible verse. However, if they will practice it

on a regular basis, they will find that they are able to do so more and more. The goal is that by Lesson 8, they will be able to sit quietly before God in prayer as they begin to ask God for insight, wisdom and truth.

- End the time of meditation by leading the group in prayer.

### 3. You will either discuss the lesson or discuss the homework.

#### WEEK 1: READ AND DISCUSS THE LESSON

- Most lessons are 10-12 pages long so reading the lesson takes about 20 minutes. The discussion questions will take the rest of the time.
- If reading aloud is not your strength, or if you don't have a strong voice, ask participants who are good readers to take turns reading the lessons.
- These lessons are written in an outline format. That makes them easier to study but more challenging to read aloud. Here are a few things that can make the reading flow more smoothly.
  - Read the bulleted lists as if they were sentences in a paragraph.
  - When reading the scriptures, do not read the book-chapter-verse reference.
  - Do not read the references to Bible verses at the end of some of the points or look up those verses in class. Those are for personal study during the week.
  - When you come to a chart, stop and discuss the principles that it illustrates.

#### WEEK 2: DISCUSS AND SHARE THE HOMEWORK

- Read each homework question, and have everyone share their answers.
- The homework discussion is the heart of the meeting. Find the most helpful way for your group to share their answers. It might be by going around the circle or you may just ask the question and wait to see who will answer first. But if you do it this way, make sure you call on everyone to give their response.
- Occasionally, in addition to the homework, there will be an assignment to discuss.

### 4. End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.

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#### LOOKING AHEAD

- **Christian Meditation Handout** for Lesson 1. Make a photocopy of this 2-page handout to give to each participant (pages 21-22).
  - **You are Special by Max Lucado**. For Lesson 5, you will need a copy of the book *You are Special*. It is available on Amazon.com in Kindle, hardcopy or paperback formats for as little as \$1. (The less expensive options are used books and take longer to ship.) It is also available in video form at YouTube.com. (On YouTube, search "You Are Special read by My Spiritual Discovery.")
  - **Skit** in Lesson 10. In Lesson 10, you will need to prepare a simple skit. You will find the skit instructions and dialog in this guide on page 15. The only material you will need is a pack of small sticky notes and a marker.
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#### FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTIONS AND NOTES FOR EACH LESSON:

## LESSON 1 – SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY

- **Read the guidelines.**
- **Meditation:**
  - Give participants a copy of the meditation handout and read it together.
  - Have a 3-5 minute time of silence where the participants practice the “Be Still” meditation in the handout.
  - Encourage them to practice 3 to 5 minutes of meditation at home during their quiet times. There are only 3 examples of meditation in this handout, but they can use the same meditation again and again or they can meditate on a scripture of their choice.
- **Read and discuss Lesson 1.**
  - Lesson 1 is an introductory lesson to help the participants get to know each other and share their goals. At first glance, it may seem like a fairly light topic, but this lesson can set a good foundation for the coming lessons. The participants will discuss fears and distractions that could interfere with attending class and doing the homework every week. It also addresses the need to “show-up” with openness, honesty, humility and vulnerability. Throughout the lessons, participants are reminded to “show-up.”
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Read the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation**
  - **Discuss the homework.**
    - Several of the questions in Lesson 1 Homework are similar to the discussion questions for that lesson. Encourage the participants to be willing to revisit their answer to a question that is repeated in the homework after they have had an opportunity to discuss it with the group.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## LESSON 2 – YOUR SPIRITUAL BATTLE

- **Read the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 2.**
  - This lesson will raise everyone's awareness of their spiritual battle. It will help them to be more aware that Satan is their real enemy.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Read the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
  - The discussions may be more personal in this homework. As participants share their “strongholds” and the impact of these strongholds in their lives, thank them for sharing, then ask the next person to share. Even if they share with tears, thank them for their vulnerability and move to the next person. (Note: It's okay if the participants cannot identify a stronghold. Later lessons will help them.)

- As the facilitator, your goal is not to “fix” anyone or resolve a situation that is shared. After everyone has shared their strongholds, thank them for their vulnerability, and let the group know that you care deeply about what they shared, but you will not be using the meeting time to comfort or counsel each other. The goal of the course is for the participants to uncover what is in their hearts and to learn to go to God for healing.
  - If anyone in the group begins to give advice or try to resolve someone's problem, remind them of the meeting guideline of not giving advice. They can share their own experience in a similar situation, but they cannot give advice. Also, keep everyone on track and do not let anyone monopolize the discussion.
  - **Note:** If someone shares a stronghold that is potentially life-threatening, privately encourage them to seek professional help. We have on occasion asked someone to get professional help before continuing with the class because of the life-threatening nature of a stronghold.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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### LESSON 3 – THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

- **Read the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 3.**
  - This lesson helps the participants begin to identify what they truly believe about God. It addresses Satan's lies about God and the impact of believing Satan's lies. Some of Satan's most damaging lies are about God. The clearer picture we have of God, the more we will depend upon him and seek his help.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Read the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework.**
    - You may find that some participants harbor negative beliefs about God. Remember that you are not trying to “fix” anyone's beliefs in this lesson. The goal for the participants is to begin to identify their deeply held beliefs about God. Future lessons will help them overcome any wrong conclusions they may have.
    - Some participants may be uneasy about sharing their true feelings about God. It may take several weeks before some of their true feelings come out. If that happens, suggest that they revisit this lesson and rework the homework.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## LESSON 4 – EMOTIONS

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 4.**
  - This lesson lays an important foundation for future lessons. God gave us emotions to help us navigate and enjoy life, but our emotions can become one of Satan's most effective ways to tempt us and disconnect us from each other and God. Understanding our own emotions and how Satan uses them to tempt us will help us fight our spiritual battles more effectively.
  - This lesson will also help the participants identify the "Emotional Rules" or "Family Rules" that they developed in childhood that can still be impacting how they feel about their emotions as an adult. You will refer to these "rules" throughout subsequent lessons.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### QUESTION FROM A FACILITATOR

**Note:** Following is a question from a facilitator regarding this lesson and our answer.

**Question:** How do I help a participant who is discouraged and considering leaving the class after this lesson?

**Answer:** This lesson can stir up some painful emotions, especially if the participant tends to stuff his or her feelings. If someone is struggling, I tell them, "I know this is hard, but going through this will help you get what you want: to like yourself better, to grow in your confidence, to have healthy relationships, and to be closer to God and more in love with him."

I remind them that learning to "sit in the pain" of an emotion will help them fight their spiritual battles more effectively. The goal is not to stay in the pain, but to sit in it long enough to name the emotion, recognize their battle and discover the truth about it. Subsequent lessons will help them uncover the lie at the root of the painful emotion and ask God for truth.

I take them through the exercise of using the 3 Principles for Spiritual Growth that were introduced in this lesson. This helps them see their spiritual battle more clearly.

Me: "Stop & Consider: What are you feeling?"

Participant: "I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_ (sad, overwhelmed, anxious, \_\_\_\_\_)."

Me: "Recognize Your Spiritual Battle. How is Satan tempting you?"

Participant: "I am tempted to \_\_\_\_\_ (give up, numb the pain by \_\_\_\_\_)."

Me: "Tell the truth. Tell yourself, tell God and tell a trusted friend."

- They are admitting this painful emotion to themselves and they are telling you (their trusted friend), but they need to tell God, too. I ask them to pray with me, and we both pour out our hearts to God about it and ask for his strength and guidance.

When participants begin to identify their most common painful/unpleasant emotions, it's natural that they want to move out from under this pain. However, leaving the group will not solve this problem. That's just another way to avoid dealing with painful emotions. Stuffing their feelings will just give Satan another opportunity.

I have seen a few participants step out of a class. Most eventually took the class again at a later time and were able to grow spiritually and emotionally. In the end, remember it's not up to you to resolve their problems. It is their decision whether or not they will leave the class. If you take responsibility for their choices, it will discourage you. Jesus let people walk away. We too must accept the choices others make. If someone chooses to leave the class, love them through their choice, and hopefully they will take the class at some future time.

**Note:** If someone shares anything that is potentially life-threatening, encourage them to seek professional help.

#### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
    - This lesson introduces three of the 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth.
    - Encourage your group to memorize them. You may find it helpful (and fun) to use incentives to motivate your group to memorize them. (You can find artwork of the 7 Principles at [www.SpiritualDiscoveryBook.com/artwork](http://www.SpiritualDiscoveryBook.com/artwork). This artwork which you can download and print is formatted to fit a 4x6 inch frame.)
    - If a participant shares about a difficult situation, do not try to resolve the problem for them. Instead, ask them to Stop & Consider what they were feeling. It may seem trivial to name an emotion, but it is actually very empowering. When the participants can identify their emotions, they can begin to fight their spiritual battles more effectively.
    - You will find it helpful to refer to the Emotions Chart on page 55 in later lessons. Participants can turn to this chart for help if they cannot identify what they are feeling.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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#### LESSON 5 – SHAME AND SELF-WORTH

- **Note:** You will need a copy of the book *You Are Special* by Max Lucado or a way to watch a YouTube video of this book (search YouTube for “You Are Special read by My Spiritual Discovery”).
- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 5.**
  - Lesson 5 gives an in-depth look at the painful emotion of shame and the power it has to disconnect us from each other.
  - It will help participants identify how feeling shame impacts their behavior and their relationships.
  - It will also help them begin to evaluate their measures for self-worth and whether their measures are healthy or worldly measures.
  - The book *You Are Special* gives a very good picture of true worthiness and takes 5-10 minutes to read aloud. After you have read the book or watched the video, ask the participants, “How does this story impact you?”
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
    - Being able to identify shame is an important step in fighting our spiritual battles.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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### LESSON 6 – UNSPIRITUAL DEFENSES

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 6.**
  - This lesson is another building block in learning to fight your spiritual battle well. It is intended to help the participants identify how they typically move out from under painful emotions and how their response can keep them stuck in a painful cycle. It is important for the participants to identify not only how they “move” but also how they justify their reaction to the pain.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
    - This homework will help participants understand their “knee jerk” response to emotional pain and the impact their response may be having on those around them.
    - Encourage the group to reflect on the cycle chart on page 85 and to fill in the blanks with current examples. It will be beneficial if they carefully consider how they respond to their emotions. The chart is a valuable tool for identifying and breaking a painful cycle.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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### LESSON 7 – IDENTIFYING THE LIES YOU BELIEVE

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 7.**
  - In this lesson, the participants will look at their core beliefs about themselves, others and God. Identifying lies can be challenging. We can live for decades as a Christian unaware of deeply held beliefs. And if we are aware of these beliefs, we can accept them as truth without realizing that they are Satan's lies. Some examples of these beliefs are:
    - “I'm all alone.”
    - “I don't fit in.”
    - “I'm not important.”
    - “I'm not enough.”
    - “I'm a failure.”
    - “I'm helpless.”

- These types of thoughts are some of Satan's effective strongholds. The goal in this lesson is to help the participants uncover their strongholds. In the next lesson, they will begin to ask God for insight, wisdom and truth about their beliefs.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

#### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
    - The goal of this homework is for participants to identify deeply held beliefs about themselves, others and God. As participants uncover core beliefs, encourage them to write them on page 100 of their book so they can refer to them in the next lesson. The next lesson will help them begin to discover the truth about these beliefs.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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#### LESSON 8 – THE POWER OF TRUTH

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 8.**
  - In this lesson participants will study the power of prayer and consider the work of the Holy Spirit in regard to their prayers. They will begin to ask God for insight, wisdom and truth regarding their deeply held beliefs that they have listed on page 100.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

#### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Discuss the homework.**
  - Hopefully, the participants will have already gained insights in their times of prayer; however, some may face a few obstacles as they contemplate praying for insight, wisdom and truth:
    - For many Christians, this is a new kind of prayer, and it may seem awkward at first.
    - Some will struggle to clear their minds and listen for God to answer. It will take practice to “be still” before God.
    - Some participants will think they already know the answer so they will not ask God.
    - Some participants will ask a different question from the one they really need to ask. (Perhaps because they are afraid of the answer.)
    - Some participants academically know that a core belief they have uncovered is not in line with the Bible, so they stop short of asking God for insight, wisdom and truth. However, knowing it's probably not true and receiving insight from God are not the same thing. Evidence that they still need to ask for insight, wisdom and truth is if they are still stirred by their emotional pain and continue living in an unhealthy cycle.

- ◻ Some will still have misconceptions about God that they have yet to identify. Asking God for truth is especially challenging for those who believe that God is not on their side. Just the thought of asking God for something will stir their emotions.
  - If a participant shares that they feel unloved by God or that God is against them, you may be tempted to share your favorite scriptures about God's love and compassion. In some cases, the participant can already quote those verses, yet they still struggle in their relationship with God.
    - ◻ If someone has not asked God for truth, we find it helpful to ask them to Stop & Consider what emotion they feel as they consider asking God for the truth.
    - ◻ Practicing the first 5 Principles for Spiritual Growth will help them discover their obstacle.
    - ◻ The participants need to take their core beliefs to God and ask him if it is true; for example:
      - “God, is it true that you do not love me?”
      - “God, is it true that you are against me?”
      - “God, is it true that my problems are insignificant to you?”
    - ◻ Participants have shared beautiful insights about God they received as a result of these prayers, and they were able to overcome traps in which they had lived for a very long time.
  - God invites all of us to ASK for insight, wisdom and truth. He promises to give generously to anyone without finding fault (James 1:5). He promises to give like a good father gives to his children (Matthew 7:7-12).
    - ◻ Encourage the participants to set aside time every day to ask, seek and knock, and allow time to listen. Remind them to be patient and to not give up. They may find it helpful to review Lesson 3.
    - ◻ Resist the temptation to suggest how God may answer their prayer.
    - ◻ Be patient with the participants. Some will quickly seek God's help and escape their traps. Others will need more time. They may have layers of lies they have to work through. Be careful not to shame them or try to drive conviction in an effort to “help” them. They may need to review this lesson at some point in later lessons.
    - ◻ As participants work through this process, they may identify more lies they believe. Encourage them to add them to the prayer list they started in the assignment for Lesson 7 and continue to ask God for insight and truth.
  - **Note:** People grow at different rates. If some participants become discouraged when others share their victories, remind them that nothing good comes from comparison. They are each on their own journey and they need to stay focused on what will help them make progress.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## LESSON 9 – LIVING FORGIVEN

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 9.**
  - This lesson will help the participants identify what they believe about God's forgiveness and evaluate if what they believe is in line with the scriptures. They will continue to look for Satan's lies in what they believe about forgiveness and continue to ask God for insight, wisdom and truth.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

## HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
    - Lesson 9 homework may bring out a lot of emotions.
    - Some participants may have difficulty looking back at painful events.
    - Some may struggle with forgiving others or even themselves.
    - They will need to identify the emotion they are feeling and use the Principles for Spiritual Growth to uncover what they believe, then look to God and his Word for the truth about forgiveness.
    - Remind participants to refer back to page 100 as they identify and resolve lies they believe.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## REVIEW AND REFLECT

On pages 143-144, you will find a summary of the first 9 lessons. Participants can refer to it when they need a review. You can choose whether or not to discuss this as a group.

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## LESSON 10 – ENTANGLED RELATIONSHIPS

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 10.**
  - This lesson will help the participants identify unhealthy relationship patterns and evaluate whether or not they are in an entangled relationship.
- **Perform the skit. (See next page.)**

## SKIT

The skit is referred to on page 156 of the book. The goal of this skit is to show the pain that can come from living in entangled relationships.

**Preparation:** Write the word "PAIN" on 18 small sticky notes.

- **Read the following statements. After you read each one, stick one of the sticky notes somewhere on yourself.**

- "I feel responsible for my grown children's financial problems." (pain)
- "I neglect my own needs to take care of others." (pain)
- "I don't speak up for myself when I am mistreated." (pain)
- "I say "yes" when I want to say "no." (pain)
- "My teenage son missed the bus again because he wouldn't get out of bed. I had to rearrange my morning schedule to take him to school." (pain)
- "My friend who eats out all the time, borrowed money from me to pay her rent." (pain)
- "My co-worker took a long lunch then asked me to finish his work." (pain)
- "I do my children's chores while they play video games for hours." (pain)
- "I feel guilty when other people face consequences for their bad choices." (pain)
- "I lose sleep when other people have problems." (pain)
- "My son loses his homework and I feel like a bad parent." (pain)
- "I feel responsible for other people's decisions." (pain)



- **Now read the following statements and place the sticky notes on someone in the group.**
  - "It's your fault that I lost my temper." (pain)
  - "You need to take care of this because it's too painful for me." (pain)
  - "I'm too tired to do my chores. You do them!" (pain)
  - "If you were more encouraging, then I would be happier." (pain)
  - "Everyone is always against me, including you." (pain)
  - "It's your fault that I drink." (pain)
- **Ask the group, "How did the skit make you feel?"**
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework.**
    - Before you begin the homework, ask if anyone in the group can list the Principles for Spiritual Growth without looking at them.
    - If needed, encourage the participants again to memorize them. Remind them that the goal is to be able to use the principles when they are triggered by a painful emotion.
    - It will be helpful for the participants to share all of the entanglement patterns they checked in Question 2, even if it is a significant number.
  - **Discuss the assignment.**
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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### LESSON 11 – OVERCOMING ENTANGLED RELATIONSHIPS – PART 1

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 11.**
  - This lesson will help the participants understand the thoughts, desires, motives, emotions and beliefs at the root of an entangled relationship. To make lasting change, we must begin with what's in our hearts.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework.**
    - This homework digs into the why behind the actions of entangled relationships. Identifying the thoughts and purifying the desires at the root of an entangled relationship will take thoughtful reflection and honesty.
  - **Discuss the assignment.**
    - “What are you learning about your thought patterns?”
    - “What is the impact of taking your unhealthy thoughts captive?”
    - Encourage the participants to continue taking “snapshots” of their thoughts throughout the next week.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## LESSON 12 – OVERCOMING ENTANGLED RELATIONSHIPS – PART 2

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 12.**
  - This lesson will help the participants identify sins that are at the root of an entangled or codependent relationship.
  - Identifying our own sin can be challenging, especially if we think the other person's sin is the root of our problems.
  - Recognizing our own sinful behavior helps us focus on the part that we can change, and this change can be the beginning of untangling an entangled relationship.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

### HOMework WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework and assignment.**
    - Before you discuss the homework, read the bullets under the section "Living Forgiven" in the Review & Reflect summary on page 144.
    - Use it to remind the participants of the truth about forgiveness. Having a good foundation of forgiveness can help the participants overcome a sin they uncover.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## LESSON 13 – BAD HABITS AND ADDICTIONS

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 13.**
  - This lesson explains the physical, emotional and spiritual battle surrounding an addiction or bad habit.
  - It will help participants identify whether or not their painful emotions move them toward a bad habit or an addiction.
  - Encourage participants to read Review & Reflect on pages 143-144 before they do their homework. Addictions and bad habits can stir up shame and unspiritual defenses.
  - **Note:** A YouTube TED-Ed video that the group may find helpful is "How Sugar Affects the Brain." by Nicole Avena. This 5 minute YouTube video explains the effects of dopamine. You can watch it together or ask the participants to watch it during the week. You can find it by searching "How Sugar Affects the Brain by Nicole Avena."

### HOMework WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Discuss the homework.**
  - This homework helps participants have more self-awareness about how their painful emotions can move them toward bad habits and addictions and how much these unhealthy behaviors impact their lives.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

#### LESSON 14 – PURSUING RIGHTEOUSNESS

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 14.**
  - In the previous lessons, the participants have considered unhealthy or sinful behaviors that God is calling them to leave behind. In this lesson, the goal is two-fold:
    - To understand the many benefits of righteous living; and
    - To help the participants recognize the difference between trying not to sin and actively pursuing righteousness.
- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

#### HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
  - **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - **Discuss the homework.**
  - **Discuss the assignment.**
    - Encourage the participants to come up with a plan for overcoming any unhealthy behaviors by using the 4 ways to flee sin and pursue righteousness.
      - Look for the way out.
      - Make level paths for your feet.
      - Put sin to death.
      - When you suffer, move toward God.
  - **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**
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## LESSON 15 – THE POWER OF YOUR STORY

- **Remind the participants of the guidelines.**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
- **Read and discuss Lesson 15.**
  - This final lesson will help the participants look back at their personal rescue by God and understand the power of their testimony.
- **Discuss the optional homework assignment with your group to make a decision about whether or not to complete this assignment as a group.**

### LESSON 15 OPTIONAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

In this exercise, the participants take another look at any stronghold they want to overcome using all the principles in this book. Because we are complex beings and our hearts are deep waters, there is often more to discover. Writing this journal after completing *Spiritual Discovery* is a great opportunity to find more healing and freedom.

There are two decisions each participant will make regarding this assignment: 1) whether or not to complete the assignment; and 2) whether or not to read their journal to the group. Remember, this assignment is optional, and the participants should not feel pressured to participate. If they choose to not read it, they should not attend the meeting where others read their journals to the group.

Some participants may choose to write the journal but not read it to the group, or they may choose to read it to just one trusted friend. If your group or part of your group wants to do the assignment and share their stories with each other, you will need to schedule an additional meeting to read the journals.

#### WRITING THE JOURNALS

There are 5 different journal outlines that can be used depending on the particular challenge a participant is facing. These are available for free download at:

[www.SpiritualDiscoveryBook.com/journals](http://www.SpiritualDiscoveryBook.com/journals).

- Bad Habits & Addictions
- Food Addictions and Bad Habits/Overeating
- Entangled Relationships
- An Anger Problem
- A Victim Mindset

Some participants may find it useful to combine 2 of the journals. For example, if someone has an anger problem and an addiction, it will be helpful to use both outlines as they write their journal.

Discuss with the participants the importance of using the 7 Principles if they are stirred by painful emotions and are tempted to stop writing. Encourage them to call a trusted friend, if needed.

- **End your meeting by asking someone to lead the group in prayer.**

## HOMEWORK WEEK:

- **Celebration meal (optional).**
- **Have a 3-5 minute time of meditation.**
  - Suggested meditation:
    - **Psalm 18:17-19** He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me... ...he rescued me because he delighted in me.
- **Discuss the homework.**
  - Understanding your rescue story can be very empowering.
  - It can give you a better picture of God's love, and it will give you a powerful testimony to share with others who are looking for a way to overcome their own struggles.
  - Remind the participants that the battle they fight with Satan is an ongoing battle, and they will need to continue to use the 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth to uncover what they believe about themselves, others and God.

## LESSON 15 OPTIONAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

### READING THE JOURNALS

You will need an additional meeting for the participants to read their journals to the group.

The journals can be very personal so it's important to set up a respectful atmosphere for the participants who read their journals. In addition to the usual group guidelines on page 9 of the book, include the following guidelines when reading journals:

- Listen attentively;
- No note-taking;
- After the participant finishes reading his or her journal, the others can respond, but not give advice.
  - They can share how they relate to an aspect of the story.
  - They can share how the story helped them to understand someone in their own life.
- Thank the participant for sharing their story.

[SPIRITUALDISCOVERYBOOK.COM/JOURNALS](http://SPIRITUALDISCOVERYBOOK.COM/JOURNALS)

**Note:** Be encouraging and patient. Participants grow at different rates.

- Some have a great deal of success their first time through the course.
- Some find it helpful to review the course again on their own or with a friend.
- Some find the online course at [MySpiritualDiscovery.com](http://MySpiritualDiscovery.com) a helpful way to review.
- Some need to take the course a second or third time in a group.

## CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

- **Psalm 77:12** I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.
- **Psalm 119:15** I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

Christian meditation is a practice of taking time to reflect upon a scripture or an attribute of God. It's asking questions and seeking insight and wisdom from God. This form of prayer can help you become more aware of God and his love.

Do you know how to meditate? If you know how to worry, in one sense, you know how to meditate. Worrying is setting your mind toward unpleasant or painful events. In worry, you consider a worst case scenario, "What if this terrible thing happens." In spiritual meditation, you set your mind and heart toward spiritual things. You ponder the greatness of God and his promises and you put your requests before him. Both worry and meditation involve the unseen. Worry wears you out, but spiritual meditation strengthens you.

Meditation will help you step away from a busy lifestyle and slow down. Learning to spend time in silence before God can help you gain insight and remember what is really important in life.

- **Psalm 4:4** ...search your hearts and be silent.

Following are examples of silent meditation to help you come before God. If you are just beginning to practice silent meditation, you may find it helpful to set a timer for 3 to 5 minutes. This might seem like a long time if you have not practiced meditation, so the timer can help you stay the course until you find that you are no longer hurried when you meditate. Even if 3 to 5 minutes seems difficult, do not give up. It will be worth the effort it will take. There are many benefits.

- It can help you gain deeper insights about God and his word.
- It can help stir up your faith and love for God.
- It can help you remember what is really important in your life.

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### Meditation #1: Be Still

This meditation will help you focus your mind and remember who God is.

- **Psalm 46:10:** Be still and know that I am God.
  - Close your eyes and imagine God saying this to you as you still your mind and heart. Recite each of the following lines several times. Notice how each line has a different focus that can help bring you before God. If your mind wanders, gently bring your thoughts back to the scripture and focus on coming before God.

*"Be still and know that I am God."*

*"Be still and know that I am."*

*"Be still and know."*

*"Be still."*

*"Be."*

## **Meditation #2: Don't Be Anxious**

Worry and anxiety can keep you from experiencing the joy and peace the Holy Spirit offers you. The goal of this meditation is to help you be more peaceful before God.

**Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything... present your requests to God.

**1 Peter 5:7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

- Read these verses and consider the possibility of God carrying the weight of all your worries and anxieties.
- God is not saying that your concerns are not valid, but he is offering to carry them for you.
- He makes this offer because he cares for you and he is strong.
- Close your eyes and imagine casting off your worries and anxieties and leaving them with God. Imagine him helping you take each one off your hands in a caring way.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring your thoughts back to God

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## **Meditation #3 Count Your Greatest Blessings**

The goal of this meditation is to remember your greatest blessings. Remembering all that God has done for you and knowing you are deeply loved by him will help you face your challenges.

**Psalm 104:34** May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.

**Psalm 103:10-12** ...he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

- Read these verses and consider all that God has done for you and why he did it. Close your eyes and sit in silence as you contemplate this.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring your thoughts back to God.