

Laying Foundations

Phase II

SAMPLE

Knowing God

Pocket Principles[®]
and Guided Discussions

For Leaders

Knowing God, Pocket Principles® and Guided Discussions, For Leaders

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NOTE: In an effort to recognize that both men and women are co-heirs of God's grace, we have chosen to use alternating gender pronouns in this document. However, we do recognize and embrace gender-specific roles in Scripture.

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A Welcome from WDA's President

Worldwide Discipleship Association, Inc.

Hello Friend!

Let me congratulate you on your decision to learn more about Jesus Christ and what it means to follow Him. There is nothing more important or more rewarding than the decision to follow Him and then to grow as a Christian.

These studies will help you get started on your journey with Christ or encourage and instruct you if you are already on this exciting journey. We in WDA want to help you grow and become all you can be in Christ Jesus!

Because you have chosen to lead, we want to do all we can to support you. In addition to the materials provided in this workbook, we would like to also offer you a free download of the Teaching Outlines for *Knowing God*.

www.disciplebuilding.org/materials/knowning-god-teaching-outlines-free-download

My prayer and confident belief is that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6) so that He is able "to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy." (Jude 1:24) To Him be glory and praise!

May God richly bless you as you strive to grow in Him.



Bob Dukes
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Knowing God

Table of Contents: Leader

b	Leader's Instructions: Pocket Principle™
d	Leader's Instructions: Guided Discussion
#1	Relating To God
1	Pocket Principle™
8	Exhibit: Bible Readings For Devotional Use
11	Guided Discussion
#2	God Reveals Himself
15	Pocket Principle™
22	Guided Discussion
#3	The Attributes Of God
25	Pocket Principle™
29	Exhibit: The Attributes Of God
31	Guided Discussion
#4	Correcting False Views Of God
34	Pocket Principle™
38	Exhibit: Correcting False Views Of God
39	Guided Discussion
#5	The Trinity And God The Father
42	Pocket Principle™
45	Guided Discussion
#6	Jesus, God The Son
49	Pocket Principle™
53	Exhibit: Proofs For The Deity Of Jesus Christ
54	Guided Discussion
#7	Our Relationship With Christ Our Brother
57	Pocket Principle™
61	Guided Discussion
#8	The Holy Spirit
64	Pocket Principle™
68	Exhibit: The Deity Of The Holy Spirit
69	Exhibit: The Personality Of The Holy Spirit
70	Guided Discussion
#9	God's Righteousness
73	Pocket Principle™
77	Exhibit: Sanctification Chart
78	Guided Discussion
#10	Security In Christ
81	Pocket Principle™
84	Guided Discussion
87	What's Next?
88	Links
89	About WDA

Leader's Instructions

For Using Pocket Principles®

What is a Pocket Principle™? Each Pocket Principle™ is a brief essay that focuses on a single topic necessary to the growth and maturity of a believer.

The 10 Pocket Principles®, about *Knowing God*, focus on enabling a new believer (or a mature believer who wants a fresh look at foundational truths) to begin getting to know God by spending time with Him, reviewing key concepts about Him (Who is the Trinity? God the Son? Holy Spirit? etc.) and learning about God's attributes and character.

Using Pocket Principles® in a Guided Discussion (small group) format:

You will notice that each Pocket Principle™ has a corresponding Guided Discussion. Because the students who are studying *Knowing God* are usually less mature believers, our suggestion is that they **not be required** to read the Pocket Principles® before coming to the Guided Discussion or after the Discussion. At this point in their maturity, it is best that they be given no work to do outside of the group discussion. (For more information about this, go to our website at www.disciplebuilding.org/about/phases-of-christian-growth/2.) Of course, you can mention the purpose of the Pocket Principles® and **invite** students to read them. The content of the Pocket Principles® will reinforce truth learned in the group discussion. Also, if a group member misses a meeting, he can read the corresponding Pocket Principle™ to review the information missed.

Using Bible Readings:

The booklet in this series entitled *Bible Readings for Devotional Use* is for the student to use in his devotional time. (The first lesson, *Relating To God*, focuses on having a devotional time.) The Bible readings (for a year) focus on the books of *John*, *Colossians*, *I John*, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Philippians*, *Jonah* and some of the *Psalms*. These books have been chosen because they emphasize many of the topics studied in the Cornerstone series. Please emphasize this to your students. The booklet contains instructions about how to use the readings. (The Exhibit after Lesson #1 contains only the instructions. For the passages etc., refer to the booklet *Bible Readings for Devotional Use*.)

Using Pocket Principles® in a Life Coaching (one-one) format:

Pocket Principles® can also be used effectively in an interactive one-one relationship. However, in this arrangement we suggest that the Life Coach (discipler) ask the student to read the Pocket Principle™ beforehand so the

material can be discussed during a one-one appointment. All the dynamics mentioned above still apply, and the Life Coach needs to tailor expectations to the maturity of the student. To facilitate interaction, the material contained in the corresponding Guided Discussion-Leaders Edition will help a Life Coach prepare for the appointment. (For more information about preparing for a Life Coaching appointment, please consult the *Life Coaching Manual* at www.disciplebuilding.org/product-category/life-coaching.)

Leader's Instructions

For Using Guided Discussions

The 10 Guided Discussions, about *Knowing God*, focus on enabling a new believer (or a mature believer who wants a fresh look at foundational truths) to begin getting to know God by spending time with Him, reviewing key concepts about Him (Who is the Trinity? God the Son? Holy Spirit? etc.) and learning about God's attributes and character.

Guided Discussions for small groups play an important role in the growth of a believer with the **major goal being interaction around Scripture**. The goal of disciple building is not just knowledge, but Christlikeness in character and conduct. Therefore, **application is essential**. (Sections "Looking At Real Life" and "Looking at My Life" are application oriented.) At least one-third of the small group discussion time should be spent discussing application of the truth. It is often tempting to get caught up in the content part of the study, but you, as the leader, are responsible to move the group along to application.

A word needs to be said about the relationship between Pocket Principles® and Guided Discussions. The content of both is generally the same, although not identical. These 2 formats provide different ways of presenting the same content, or both can be used to reinforce the content. (Another type of WDA material is Teaching Outlines. These are designed to be used by a teacher who wants to present the content in a lecture format to a larger group. Free Teaching Outlines can be found at the WDA store on our website at www.disciplebuilding.org/materials/knowning-god-teaching-outlines-free-download.)

There are two (2) versions of each study: the Leader's version with answers and special notes, and the Student version with questions, but no answers. *Answers and notes to leaders are in gray, italicized text.*

Much of the preparation has been done for you as a leader: topics have been chosen, Scriptures chosen, questions written. However, it is important that you become comfortable with the material so that you will be able to be flexible and focus on the needs of your group. In the *Small Groups Manual* (WDA), you will find information about the practical aspects of group leadership. Please refer to the section titled "Practical Dynamics of Small Group Leadership." This is available from the WDA store at www.disciplebuilding.org/store/leadership-manuals/small-groups-manual.

Relating To God

You have begun a journey to know God, but did you know that you are actually joining a story in progress? God has desired to have a relationship with you for a long time and has prepared the way for you to enter into that relationship. When a person comes to faith in Christ and passes from spiritual death to life, a transaction takes place that has many far-reaching implications. One of these is complete and full reconciliation with God and the start of a new relationship. It is a relationship that is fuller, deeper, and richer than anything we can possibly imagine.

There are fundamental differences between God and mankind that impact the relationship and make it unlike human relationships. For example, God is infinite, while we are finite. He is all-knowing, while we have very limited understanding, both of the world we live in and the people around us. God is the Creator; we are created beings. He is invisible; we are visible. He is unchangeable; we change. God is perfect; we obviously are not.

However, there are also ways in which a relationship with God has many things in common with other relationships in our lives. That is, it requires time, conversation, mutuality, intimacy, etc. The best relationships are the ones in which we share at deep levels, consistently over a long period of time. Our relationship with God works the same way.

As with most relationships, our relationship with God is reciprocal. There are certain things that God does to establish and maintain the relationship, and there are specific things we must do for the relationship to grow and develop. Understanding this reciprocal dynamic and how it affects the relationship is very important. We can cultivate our relationship with God by understanding this reciprocal dynamic and by understanding how to nurture this relationship.

We also have a responsibility to obey the commands of God. This is love in action; love with shoes on.

GOD TAKES THE INITIATIVE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH US.

He knows us intimately (Psalm 139:1-4).

God knows everything about us—our actions, our movements, our thoughts, our words. In fact, because He is all-knowing and exists outside of space and time, He knows these things before they even happen. He knows us far better than we know ourselves. Knowledge can be scary in human relationships. We choose what we think is safe to disclose to one another, and we go to great lengths to

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protect information we don't want others to know. We are free to be totally open and honest with God because He knows all about us anyway. And the amazing thing is that He loves us unconditionally despite full knowledge of everything about us that is unlovely.

He protects and shields us. He is our security (Psalm 139:5-6).

"You hem me in, behind and before," writes the psalmist. "You have laid your hand upon me." The laying of God's hand upon us is a picture of his all-encompassing care for us. In other Psalms, David uses many pictures to describe God's care of him including that of a shield, a fortress, a hiding place, a refuge, and a shelter. He paints the following picture in the first two verses of Psalm 91: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' "

He is completely attentive to us regardless of our circumstances (Psalm 139:7-12).

"Where can I go from your Spirit?" wonders the psalmist. "Where can I flee from your presence?" He then reflects that no matter where he could possibly go, he knew that he could never go beyond the reach of God's personal concern.

Part of the struggle and the joy of our lives comes from learning to persevere in habits of prayer.

This is a significant distinction between our relationship with God and that with any other person. No human, no matter how much he or she may want to, can ever always be there for us, either physically or emotionally. At some point, distance or other factors will prevent it. However, we can never go anywhere that God will not be with us.

He initiated and sustains our being: external (physical) and internal (emotional, spiritual) (Psalm 139:13-16).

One of the things we most value about those we are close to is that there is a strong bond of understanding between us. These special friends seem to understand what really makes us tick. Who knows better what makes a clock tick than the craftsman who builds the clock? Likewise, who knows us better than the God who created us? He knows us inside and out, better than anyone else ever can. He created us in His image to reflect His glory, yet He has created each of us uniquely with a predetermined number of days that we shall live upon this earth.

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WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

To seek Him (Jeremiah 29:10-14)

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart,” was God’s word to the Jews living in captivity (Jeremiah 29:10-14). The heart represents the center of one’s being, the seat of emotions and will. Scripture includes several commands that relate to the heart: We are told to love God with all of our hearts (Deuteronomy 6:5 and elsewhere), to trust with all of our hearts (Proverbs 3:5), and to repent with all of our hearts (Joel 2:12).

Our seeking is not to be a casual endeavor. Consider the contrast between two men who go on separate camping trips. The first man realizes during the week that he has misplaced his pocketknife. It was a good knife, although relatively inexpensive. He would like to find it, and every day he keeps his eyes open for it in case he should happen to stumble across it.

Unlike other books,
God’s Word is living
and spiritual, practical
and dynamic.

The second man realizes the night before he is to leave to return home that he has lost his car keys. Early the next morning, he receives a call from his wife saying that their teenage son has been in a car accident and is in intensive care in the hospital. There is no casual searching here. He has got to find those keys! He scrambles around on his hands and knees, tears his tent and camping gear apart, and frantically retraces every step he made the previous day. The first man’s search for his knife is a half-hearted effort; the second man’s search for his keys is with his whole heart.

To love Him with our heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:36-39)

A teacher of the law asked Jesus, “Of all the things we’re expected to do, what is the most important?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37) According to the response that Jesus gave to the teacher, everything taught in the law can be summed up in this one commandment.

We have a responsibility not simply to acknowledge God’s existence or even to acknowledge His rights as creator, but to love Him with our hearts, our souls, and our minds. This is another way of saying that we should love Him with every part of our being.

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To obey Him (John 14:21)

We also have a responsibility to obey the commands of God. This is love in action; love with shoes on. According to the words of Jesus, obedience is how we show our love for God (John 14:21). The Apostle John, who recorded these words, later reiterates Jesus' words by stating flatly, "This is love for God: to obey His commands." (I John 5:3) John also argues that if we say we have come to know God (have a relationship with Him) yet do not obey His commands, then we are lying (I John 2:4).

To draw near to Him (James 4:8)

James, the brother of Jesus, writes, "Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:8) This verse speaks of another responsibility we have in our relationship with God. It also speaks of our outward actions (wash your hands) and our inward thoughts and motives (purify your hearts). Each is important as we draw near to God. Because we are sinful beings, we will continue to do things that create distance in our relationship with God. Each time we become aware of this distance, we should once more humble ourselves, confess our sin and draw close to God. We draw near in need; He draws near in fullness.

...the amazing thing is that God loves us unconditionally despite full knowledge of all about us that is unlovely.

Notice that each of the responsibilities discussed above comes with a promise—a positive benefit for us as we fulfill the responsibility. This pattern further illustrates the reciprocal nature of our relationship. When we seek God, He allows Himself to be found by us, and He reveals His gracious plans for us. When we demonstrate our love by obeying God, He shows His love to us and reveals Himself to us. When we draw near to God, He draws near to us.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS NURTURED BY INTERACTING WITH HIM.

Every good relationship thrives on shared experiences and a true knowledge of each other. In its essence, Christianity is a relationship between the people of God and the Living God. By revealing Himself to us and reconciling us to Himself through Jesus Christ, God sought us out and began this relationship. In response, we are to actively pursue God and cultivate our relationship with Him. We can do this by spending time with Him.

But people often ask, "How do you spend time with God when you can't see Him?" Fortunately, God has shown us how. He's given us His Word—the

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Bible—and He meets with us in prayer. As we consistently read the Bible and pray to God, we grow closer to Him. As we see how He interacts with people in the Bible, we come to understand His character, His values, and His personality. Through our time in His Word and prayer, God embraces us and transforms our lives.

We interact with God through the Word.

Reading and contemplating the Bible can be a powerful experience. Unlike other books, God's Word is living and spiritual, practical and dynamic. Consider this: God, our Living Creator, has spoken! He has begun a dialogue with us, revealing His infinite thoughts to our finite minds through the Bible.

The Book of Hebrews says God's Word is living and active (4:12). Through it, God engages our whole being—soul, spirit, body, mind and heart. As we read and obey His Word, it has a profound influence in our lives. Psalm 19:7-14 tells us that God's Word is able to revive our souls, make us wise, encourage us, and guide us. More than just good advice, God's Word is a significant part of His conversation with His people.

Spending time with God's Word is like having an audience with a king. This means we must approach the Bible as we would approach God Himself: humbly and obediently. Jesus told His followers, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." (John 14:21) Spending time with God's Word is not simply an exercise in scholarship or self-improvement but a faithful expression of our reverence and love for God Himself. With a teachable attitude and a willingness to be changed, we come closer to God through His Word.

God's Word is just that—His Word. As such, it bears the full integrity of His character and the limitless strength of His sovereignty. In Psalm 37, David tells us that God will accomplish what He promises. He also exhorts us: "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." (verse 4) Therefore, we ought to look to the Bible with expectant hearts and minds, eager to see God reveal His truth and accomplish His will among us. Do you expect God to reveal Himself to you in His Word? Does loving obedience result from your time with God in His Word?

In its essence,
Christianity is a
relationship between
the people of God and
the Living God.

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We interact with God through prayer—having a conversation with Him.

Unlike our earthly friendships, our communion with God doesn't have to have interruptions. Our lives can truly be an unending dialogue with the Lord. Praying to God continues our conversation with Him, building upon the time we spend with God in His Word.

But what is prayer? Prayer, the Apostle John writes, is our response to God's outreach to us. The Lord says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20) Prayer is a yielding to God and an acceptance of His fellowship, as simple as a word of welcome or a cry for help.

More than just good advice, God's Word is a significant part of His conversation with His people.

Nevertheless, a life of prayerful attention to God doesn't always come easily. Part of the struggle and the joy of our lives comes from learning to persevere in habits of prayer. God, in His grace, teaches us to pray and gives many examples of prayer in the Bible. For example, Psalm 25 shows some of the roles prayer can have in our lives. Prayer can be a way of entrusting yourself to God, expressing your hope in Him, seeking guidance, asking forgiveness, gaining His perspective, seeking refuge and receiving His comfort.

We also see elements of prayer in other Psalms. Psalm 100 is a brief expression of *thanksgiving*, calling us to worship the Lord with gladness and joyful songs, to acknowledge Him as our creator and leader, to praise Him for His enduring love and faithfulness. Psalm 51, David's song of contrition and hope, is also a model of faithful prayer. He *confesses* his sin and pleads for mercy (verses 1-9). Seeking God's help, he entrusts himself to His goodness and sustaining power (*petition*) (verses 10-15). He seeks the establishment of God's Kingdom and asks God to bless others (*intercession*) (verses 16-19).

At its simplest, faithful prayer is how we thank, praise and worship God. It requires no great programs or resources. As we have seen the Apostle James says, "Come near to God, and he will come near to you." (James 4:8a) This nearness of God is truly the essence of your relationship with Him. When you interact with God through His Word and in prayer, you're coming closer to God. By setting apart a time and place to devote your attention to God, you'll establish habits that will transform your relationship with Him.

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SUMMARY

Christianity is essentially a relationship with God. By spending time with God in His Word and in prayer, we can grow closer to Him.

- Our relationship with Him is reciprocal. He initiates; we respond. He wants us to pursue Him.
- God reveals His character, will and goodness through the Bible.
- We should approach God's Word with gratitude, humility and obedience.
- God uses His Word to help us and change our lives.
- Prayer is our response to God beginning a conversation with us.
- The Bible gives many examples of the roles prayer can have in our lives.
- It helps to have specific times to meet with God in His Word and in prayer.

The booklet in this Cornerstone series called *Bible Readings for Devotional Use* provides 52 weeks of Bible readings from books of the Bible that cover topics emphasized in the lessons that follow. This booklet can be purchased in the WDA store at www.disciplebuilding.org/product-category/cornerstone. The Exhibit entitled *Bible Readings for Devotional Use (Instructions)* (which follows this lesson) is the instructions page of the booklet mentioned above. It will help orient you to spending time with God. It provides practical ideas about prayer and about Bible reading and Bible study.

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Bible Readings For Devotional Use

Instructions

“God is most glorified
when we are most
enjoying Him.”

The side quote from John Piper, Christian speaker and author, serves as an excellent introduction to the devotional life. The purpose of devotions is to know and enjoy God personally as you spend time with Him each day. James tells us, “Come near to God and He will come near to you.”(4:8a)

Two of the ways we draw near to God are in prayer as we listen and talk with Him and as we “hear” His voice in Scripture. (There are many aspects to drawing close to God, but only two will be discussed here.)

- **Praying** is conversing with God: listening and talking. Our conversation with God improves as we get to know Him, just as conversation with a friend becomes easier and more rewarding as the relationship grows. Some of the ingredients in prayer are:

Thanksgiving, praise and worship—(Example in Psalm 100)

Confession— (Example in Psalm 51:1-9)

Committing myself to God— (Example in Psalm 51:13,15)

Petition—making personal requests for self (Example in Psalm 51:10-12)

Intercession— making requests for others (Example in Psalm 51:18)

- **Reading His Word** is a second aspect of drawing near to God. The goal, at this point in your walk with God, is not to do an in-depth study or to completely understand each idea/truth presented. In fact, no one, no matter how mature and educated, understands everything in God’s Word because its depths are as unsearchable as He is.

The goal is to focus on what you do understand. As you grow, more and more of the truths in Scripture will become clear to you. It is much like putting a puzzle together. At first, individual pieces may be confusing or meaningless; however, as the pieces are joined together, they begin to reveal a picture that is meaningful. Although you may be unsure of some Scripture passages at first, your understanding will increase over time as you grow in your overall experience with Scripture. Do not become distracted or discouraged if you do not understand a specific passage. Instead, focus on what you do understand. Remember that the Holy Spirit is your teacher and “will guide you into all truth” at His pace. (Of course, if a question is particularly bothersome to you, talk with your mentor, small group leader or pastor.)

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Some useful categories of questions to ask as you read a passage of Scripture are:

Observation questions: What are the facts?

Interpretation questions: What do they mean?

Application questions: How do they apply to me?

A word about versions of the Bible—there are many good versions of the Bible to choose from. We suggest that you use the New International Version. In our opinion, it is the most readable version and facilitates understanding. Of course, you are free to use any version that is recommended by your church or group.

Two principles of Scripture—

First—when reading and studying Scripture it is essential to understand the context in which a passage occurs. There are two different ways to use the word “context.” “Context” may refer to the cultural setting. For example, knowing the “context” of your life (who your parents are, where you grew up, etc.) enables someone to understand you more fully. In a similar way, knowing the context of a passage of Scripture enables the reader to correctly understand the passage’s meaning. The word “context” may also refer to the flow of thought in the text. For example, what happened immediately before? what was said? what happened afterwards? In Scripture, both usages of the word “context” are important.

Second—when seeking to understand Scripture, it is important to know the author’s intent. The meaning is static: it means what the author originally intended it to mean. It does not change over time, from culture to culture, etc. Although there is only one meaning there may be many applications. For example, a truth from Scripture is, “Love your neighbor.” There are many ways this truth can be applied. These ways vary according to the person, the circumstance, the amount of time available, etc.

Keeping a journal is a way to maximize the benefit from your times with God. We strongly suggest that you get a notebook and write down insights you have, things you learn about God, things you learn about yourself, sins you need to confess, things you are thankful for, etc. You might want to designate part of the journal as your “Prayer List,” where you keep a list of prayer requests and answers!

A question that invariably arises is, “How long should my devotional time be?” There is no specific “right” length of time, just as there is no right amount of time for two good friends to spend together. If having a devotional time is new to you, begin with 15 or 20 minutes and increase as you are able.

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Exhibit

A resource that might be quite helpful to you is a booklet published by InterVarsity Press entitled *Quiet Time: A Practical Guide for Daily Devotions*. This publication includes encouragement and practical suggestions and can be ordered through Christian bookstores or on the internet.

These instructions are from a booklet called *Bible Readings for Devotional Use* which can be purchased from the WDA store at www.disciplebuilding.org/store. The booklet will give you 52 weeks of Bible readings, as well as background and special notes about certain passages. The books of the Bible chosen are books that emphasize some of the principles focused on in the Cornerstone materials.

Sample

Relating To God

IMPORTANT to Leader: *Answers and notes to leaders are in gray, italicized text. Much of this lesson will be you talking, instructing about having a Quiet Time and then demonstrating a QT. The remainder of these lessons will require less talking by you, and more by the students.*

GOAL:

For a disciple to experience a devotional time with God during the small group session and commit to having a personal daily devotional time.

GETTING STARTED:

Think of the person you consider your “best friend.” What are some elements that contributed to the development of this close relationship?

Responses will most likely be spending one-on-one time together, meaningful conversation, sharing about your struggles, etc.

Transition: *In this lesson, we will learn how to use these same relational elements in relating to God and growing in our relationship with Him.*

STUDYING TOGETHER:

To grow in a relationship with God there must be two-way (reciprocal) communication.

Read Psalm 139:1-16.

1. What do these verses say about God’s relationship with us?

He knows us intimately, He protects us, is our security, is completely attentive to us, initiates with us, sustains us.

2. Looking at the following verses: What are some of our responsibilities in our relationship with God?

Jeremiah 29:10-14 *To seek Him*

Matthew 22:36-39 *To love Him with heart, soul and mind*

James 4:8 *To draw near to Him*

John 14:21 *To obey Him*

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We develop our relationship by spending time with God doing two very important activities.

First, we must learn to **Listen to God through His Word.**

As we read the Word, God may want to speak to us about any number of things. He may show us a sin to confess, a promise to claim, an attitude to change, a commitment to make, a praise to offer, something to thank Him for, a command to obey, an example to follow, a prayer to pray, an error to avoid, a truth to believe.

Second, we must learn to **Talk to God through Prayer.**

Prayer is essentially a conversation with God. In prayer, we can express praise and thanks; ask God for guidance; confess our sins; receive peace and comfort; commit ourselves to God; ask Him to meet our needs; ask Him to work in the lives of others.

Let's have a devotional time together as a group.

You will model what it means to have a devotional time with God during this study.

3. Open the devotional time in prayer.

Open the group devotional time with prayer asking God to give you wisdom as you read His Word.

4. Select a passage of scripture to read. (For our study today, we will read James 1:22-25 silently.)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. James 1:22-25

5. Take a few moments and write down some insights that especially spoke to you. You may also include an action step that God may want you to take. To start with, write no more than a paragraph.

Of course during a devotional time you will be alone and won't be sharing aloud with others, but in order to give the group an example to follow, you take the initiative and share your thoughts after giving the group a few minutes to write down their own thoughts. Or you may share the example provided below.

Sample

Example: God showed me that I am more interested in knowing what the Bible says rather than doing what it says. I know that if I'm going to change and grow in my walk with Him, I have to begin applying God's principles and promises to my life. I will begin asking God to show me how to apply His truth to my life when I have my daily devotional time with Him.

6. Next, spend some time praying to God in a conversational style as if He were sitting in a chair right in front of you.

Let the group watch and listen to you pray. Ask them to notice the different elements of prayer that are utilized. Use your own prayer or use the example provided below.

Example: Lord, I praise you because you are faithful to carry out the promises in your Word.

I haven't been reading the Bible like I know I need to. Help me to be more consistent in studying your Word and applying it to my life.

I pray that you would give me wisdom as I talk with my neighbor over dinner about what it means to know Christ. Give me the words to say. I pray that you would draw him into a relationship with Christ. I pray that the Holy Spirit would convict him of his sin and show him his need for a Savior.

Lord, I also pray for my co-worker, that you would reconcile his marriage.

And, I lift up to you my good friend, Jenny, that you would help her find a job. Give her peace and trust in you as she goes through this difficult time of unemployment.

Lord, thank you for hearing my prayer. Help me to follow your Spirit's lead today and to glorify you in all I do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

LOOKING AT REAL LIFE:

7. What benefits do you see to having a daily Quiet Time?

Sample

LOOKING AT MY LIFE:

There are three things involved in making a commitment to having a personal daily devotional time.

- a. **Choose a Time**—The best time is often in the morning before the day begins. Make it a priority in your day.

The time of day that works best for me is _____.

- b. **Choose a Place**—The place should be quiet with no distractions where you can be alone.

The place where I will have my devotional time is _____.

- c. **Develop a Plan**—*If time allows, give group members the opportunity to read the accompanying Exhibit, Bible Readings For Devotional Use (Instructions), during the meeting. Otherwise, encourage them to read it on their own. After reading it, each person should be able to come up with a simple plan for a devotional time of 15 to 20 minutes. Be sure to remind them that it is better to set a small goal time-wise and be successful than to set a big goal and be frustrated.*

Leader:

Close the group in prayer asking God to give each person the discipline to have a personal devotional time each day. Ask group members to be ready at the next meeting to talk about their experiences during devotional times this week.

About Prayer: Since this series of studies is directed toward young believers, we are suggesting that their involvement in group prayer be progressive: from listening to the teacher pray, to participation using simple sentence prayers and on to spontaneous praying. Often young believers have little or no experience with public prayer and may be hesitant to pray aloud. Using a progressive approach will help them become comfortable praying aloud. Be sensitive about where group members are in their development and involve them accordingly. If group members are more mature Christians, of course you may let them participate in the prayer. Tailor the prayer to the maturity and needs of the group.

Sample