



Group Discussion Guide



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Empowered: a Life of Spiritual Discipline Group Discussion Guide

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Series Overview

Through this study, you can establish or deepen your worship of, and connection to, God. By leading a life of spiritual discipline, you draw closer to God. When you draw closer to God, you are **Empowered**.

Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: **Empowered**.

You may choose to use this guide:

- with your Grace Group.
- with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

1-Rebuke + Encouragement

Scripture: [Haggai 1](#), [Haggai 2](#)

Icebreaker: First Things First

Discuss what it means to put first things first. What problems can result when we forget to put first things first?

Discussion Questions: Putting God First

- Haggai advises us to put God first in our lives ([Hag 1:1-5](#)).
 - ▶ What were the people doing that did not honor God?
 - ▶ Make a list of the areas of our lives where we struggle to put God first.
 - ▶ When we put God first, how does this benefit us ([Mat 6:33](#) and [Rom 14:12](#))?

- Once we decide to put God first, we can use some encouragement. Which of the following encouragements that Haggai gave the people would you find most reassuring?
 - ▶ God is with you, so be strong ([Hag 2:4](#)).
 - ▶ Don't be afraid; God won't abandon you ([Hag 2:5](#)).
 - ▶ God's glory will come ([Hag 2:6-7](#)).
 - ▶ It all belongs to Him; God will provide ([Hag 2:8-9](#)).

- Before you can worship effectively, you need to prepare your Temple ([Hag 2:14](#) and [1Cor 6:19](#)). What are some ways to prepare your mind and heart for worship?

Dig a Little Deeper: Issues with Materialism

| <i>Issue</i> | <i>Passage</i> |
|---|--|
| Pleasing yourself first prevents real satisfaction. | Hag 1:6 Php 4:11-13 |
| Only God can provide true security. | Hag 1:9-11 |
| Money can't buy the best things in life. | Hag 2:1-9 |
| Greed is contagious. | Hag 2:10-19 |
| In the end, possessions are worthless. | Mat 6:19-20 Jas 1:10-11 |

Application Exercise: First in One Area

Pick one area of your life where you want to put God first (schedule, relationships, money...). Begin to make changes in that area to show God you are serious about putting Him first.

2-Outer Court

Scripture: [Exodus 27:1-8](#), [Exodus 30:17-21](#),
[Exodus 40](#), [1Kings 7](#)

Icebreaker: Prepare for a Special Occasion

Discuss the types of things we do to get ready for a special occasion.

Discussion Questions: What the Tabernacle Pictures

- What was the purpose of the tabernacle ([Exo 25:8](#))? What form does the tabernacle take today ([1Cor 6:19-20](#))?
- There was only one door into the tabernacle. What is the significance to us of an "only door" ([John 10:7-9](#) and [John 14:6](#))?
- Discuss how the brazen altar relates to giving and sacrifice today.
 - ▶ giving ([Mat 6:19-21](#) and [1Pet 4:10](#))
 - ▶ sacrifice ([Mark 8:34-36](#))
- What is today's equivalent of stopping at the laver to cleanse yourself?
 - ▶ confession ([1John 1:8-10](#))
 - ▶ cleansing by God's Word ([Rom 13:12-14](#) and [Psa 119:11](#))
 - ▶ fasting ([Mat 6:16-18](#))Of the three, which are you most likely to do to cleanse yourself? Why?

Dig a Little Deeper: Brazen Altar and Laver

Everything in the outer court was made of brass. Brass symbolizes judgment (**Num 21:9**). Without God, we are sinful and judged (**2Cor 5:21**).

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>The altar pictures the sacrifice of Christ (Heb 10:1-14). The altar teaches us that:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The only way to God is through the sacrifice of Christ (John 14:6 and 1John 2:23).● The way to restore our relationship with God is through the sacrifice of Christ (Rom 8:38-39 and 1John 1:7-9).● The way to express love to God is through the sacrifice of Christ (Heb 13:10-16). |
| <p>The laver pictures the Spirit cleansing us with the Word (John 17:17). The laver teaches us to:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● wash our hands with Christ (Jas 4:8).● wash our feet with Christ (Psa 119:59).● look into the mirror with Christ (Jas 1:22-25 and Pro 21:2). |

Application Exercise: Thank God for Christ's Sacrifice

Pray, thanking God for the sacrifice of Christ. Tell Him what is most meaningful to you about His sacrifice.

3-Holy Place

Scripture: [Exodus 25:23-40](#), [Exodus 27:20-21](#),
[Exodus 40](#), [1Kings 7](#)

Icebreaker: Keep the Lines Open

Make a list of tips for keeping the lines of communication open with other people.

Discussion Questions Candle, Bread, Incense

- Discuss how the candlestick pictures Christ ([John 8:12](#) and [John 9:5](#)).
- Discuss how a candle can picture you reflecting Christ's light.
 - ▶ What can you do to trim the wick (remove the charred portion of the wick, your sin, [1John 1:9](#))?
 - ▶ What can you do to keep the lamp full (allow the Holy Spirit to fill you)?
 - ▶ In what ways do you reflect Christ's light to others ([Mat 4:19](#) and [Col 1:27-28](#))?
- Consider the shewbread as a picture of God's Word. In what way do you make God's Word a priority in your life ([Mat 4:4](#), [Rom 2:13](#), [2Tim 2:15](#))?
- Discuss how the picture of incense as prayer can improve our prayer life.
 - ▶ The continual burning of incense pictures prayer without ceasing ([1The 5:17](#))? How can we pray without ceasing?
 - ▶ The location of the incense directly in front of the mercy seat teaches us to pray directly to God ([Mat 6:6](#)). How can we ensure we do not put anything or anyone between us and God?
 - ▶ The heat of the incense pictures fervent prayer ([Jas 5:16](#)). What, if anything, hinders fervent prayer?

Dig a Little Deeper: Bended Knee

What is your attitude when you talk to God? Do you go to Him in humility? Reflect on these passages and consider how the physical posture pictures a right attitude.

The bended knee of a bird causes tendons in its legs to tightly grasp its branch. Could the bended knee be a key to our holding fast to our Branch? (Jer 23:5-6)

- **Psalm 95:6**
- **Isaiah 45:23**
- **Luke 22:41**
- **Ephesians 3:14**
- **Philippians 2:10**

Application Exercise: Improved Communications

Where is your biggest room for improvement in communicating with God?

| <i>Communication Line</i> | <i>needs work - - - - - good</i> |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Talking to God; Prayer (humble, continual, fervent, according to His will, specific, simple) | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |
| Listening to God; Bible Reading (apply what I learn, share what I learn, read several times a week, submitted to God) | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 |

Make one change in your daily routine to begin improving your communications with God.

4-Most Holy Place

Scripture: [Exodus 25:1-22](#), [Exodus 40](#), [1Kings 7](#)

Icebreaker: Intermediary

Make a list of situations in which you have gone through an intermediary to communicate with someone.

Discussion Questions: Solitude, Rest, Silence

- What was the purpose of the veil ([Exo 26:33](#))? What does the torn veil picture ([Luke 23:45-46](#) and [Heb 10:19-20](#))?
- What can we do to help us hear the still, small voice ([1Kgs 19:11-13](#))? Solitude is being alone on purpose, choosing to leave the noise in our lives to be with God. How much time in the past week have you been away from people, entertainment, and responsibilities to be alone with God? What are some ways to be alone with God on purpose?
- God is the only source of spiritual rest ([Mat 11:28-30](#)). Discuss what it takes to enter into that rest. Which of the following has sometimes interfered with your spiritual rest?
 - ▶ Busyness ([Psa 39:6](#))
 - ▶ Conflict ([2Cor 7:5](#))
 - ▶ Grief ([Jer 45:3](#))
 - ▶ Unconfessed sin ([Psa 32:3-5](#))
 - ▶ Illness ([Job 30:17](#))
- What does it take for you to be still and focus on God ([Psa 46:10](#) and [Psa 62:5-8](#))? What can you stop doing or start doing to help you experience silence with God?

Dig a Little Deeper: Guided Quiet Time

Here is a process you can use for quiet time. Feel free to modify it to best fit your needs.

- Approach: Make a list of your responsibilities and the key people in your life. Give the list to God to manage for a few minutes while you have quiet time.
- Pray: Ask God to show you what He wants you to see in His Word.
- Read: Read a passage of Scripture.
- Study: Write a few notes about the passage.
 - ▶ Historical: What happened? Who are the key people? What are the key points?
 - ▶ Doctrinal: How does this passage point to some aspect of God?
 - ▶ Inspirational: What from this passage does God want you to apply to your life?
- Meditate: Pick one or more verses for focus. Imagine yourself being present and reacting to the circumstances of the story or to the teaching in the verses. As you react, in what way are you satisfied, disappointed, angry, grateful, afraid, reassured?
- Pray: Tell God what you see and what you sense He wants you to do based on the passage. Ask Him to help you make the changes He desires.

Application Exercise: Have Some Quiet Time

Have some quiet this week. Schedule some quiet for several upcoming weeks.



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