

## Discussion Leaders Guide

By Michael G. Goetz

### 1. Preparation

Preparation prior to the meeting is important. Begin by reading the chapter and scriptures quoted in that chapter. Then pray this simple question: “Lord, what do you want to say to me and the group through this chapter?” Expect that *Our Good Father* will give you thoughts in response to this question to help guide your preparation, and to help you to grow personally closer to him through the experience. (John 10:27; Psalm 32:8). Prepare a group discussion that will last a total of about 45 – 60 minutes.

### 2. Introduction

Begin the group discussion by introducing the topic. You can do this with an opening discussion question that introduces the topic. You can also start with a brief comment about why the topic is relevant to you and to the rest of the group.

### 3. Bible

Then take the group through the main Scriptures associated with the chapter. You might want to share something you learn from your own study about a key word or some background that helps to explain the context of the verse. You might also want to refer to the commentary or a story from the chapter itself. But the main thing here is to just ask simple discussion questions that help the group to look carefully at the Scriptures and discover for themselves what God is saying about the topic. Here are a few sample discussion questions to get you started:

- What stands out to you most about this verse?
- What does this say about the nature of God or the nature of man?
- Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, or a promise to claim?

As you open up the discussion, encourage the group to avoid rabbit trails. (1 Corinthians 14:33) At the same time, resist the temptation to control. (1 Thessalonians 5:19) Be flexible. As a wise person once said, the best way to make God laugh is to tell him our plans! (Isaiah 55:8-9) The key here is to just let go, and let the Lord lead everything. Listen closely to “the still, small voice” in your spirit during the discussion. Expect the Lord to give you wisdom and discernment in the moment. (Isaiah 30:21; 1 Kings 19:11-13) This combination of Bible based material and Spirit led discussion is what glorifies God and brings a highly personal, life-giving quality to the group experience. (John 4:24; John 15:5)

### 4. Application

Conclude with one or two of the discussion questions provided at the end of the chapter. They are designed to help us apply the lesson to our everyday lives. Feel free to share a closing thought or word of encouragement as well.

One final thought. Don’t worry if you think you made a mistake or if something happens at the meeting that you are not happy with. God often uses our weaknesses to reveal his power. (2 Corinthians 12:10) He will cause all things to work together for good. (Romans 8:28) Expect that God will use his Word and your Spirit led discussion to make a lasting impact on everyone. After your meeting is over, meditate on this. *Our Good Father loves you with an everlasting love!* He is proud of all that you do for him.

Thank you for serving.