



2019-2020 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 8

# Series Overview and Guides

JULY-AUGUST 2020

## Objective

*what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study*

That we engage wisely and faithfully in the smoothing process with those around us.

### STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another."

—Proverbs 27:17

"Instead, he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd's bag. Then, with his sling in his hand, he approached the Philistine."

—1 Samuel 17:40

"To those who are willing to be reasonably open...there will be a lasting, affirmative contribution made to their lives...Most of us don't like to be threatened and certainly most groups and institutions avoid it like the plague. That's all the more reason people...are needed [who] penetrate through our layers of self-deception and make us see the truth, even when it hurts."

—Jarrell McCracken

Forward to *You and Your Network*

## Premise

*why we are studying this*

God often uses people to accomplish certain kinds of refinements in us, and we must learn to draw near and allow people to help knock off our rough edges.

### STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"There are 'friends' who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother."

—Proverbs 18:24 (NLT)

"I think we are all so alone in what lies deepest in our souls, so unable to find the words and perhaps the courage to speak with unlocked hearts, that we do not know at all that it is the same with others."

—Sheldon Vanauken  
*A Severe Mercy*

## Theme

*what the study is about*

We can learn from and be blessed by others. We can serve, teach, and bless others as well. Yet this positive interaction requires a counter-cultural commitment to humility and wisdom. When humility and wisdom operate in one's soul: 1) people are loved constantly, 2) we engage and disengage with care, 3) we experience joy, and 4) God is glorified.

### STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since *love covers a multitude of sins*. [Proverbs 10:12]. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen."

—1 Peter 4:7-11



Frisco Bible Church  
*a redeemed community*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PERMISSION

You are welcome to copy and distribute this study guide for your personal or group study.

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SERIES 8 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Each Christian must develop internal character, something that frankly takes the most work of any refining relationship. We naturally shirk this and hide behind success, failure, service, noise, and many other shields in order to avoid joining the Lord in the labor of our own sanctification.

OBJECTIVE

We become ever more useful.

THE J CURVE

"The shape of the letter J illustrates a simple yet elegant concept: Christians need to go down to come up. Not just once, but again and again. The everyday Christian life is dying to convenience, worldly success, and approval, only to be resurrected into repentance, humility, and hope. Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday. If we understand the J curve, we won't be flummoxed when we miss a flight connection, fail to soothe a crying baby, or strike out when trying to help a homeless person."

—Paul E. Miller

*J Curve: Dying and Rising with Christ in Everyday Life*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we allow the Holy Spirit and others to smooth us for usefulness. Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 1: Refining One's Relationship with Self

1. This series is the last in our annual theme, *No Stone Unturned*.
  - Discuss "no stone unturned." What do you recall about the premise of this theme?
  - Review Colossians 3:16 together. What three relationships are alluded to in this verse?
2. Read the *Objective*, *Premise*, and *Theme* on the first page of this series packet.
  - Have you experienced a relationship which was both difficult and positive for you? Describe how this was possible.
  - Why are we naturally unwilling to let others "knock off our rough edges"?
3. Read the *Objective* of this week's study, and then read Matthew 7:3-5.
  - What is the point of this story?
  - What should always be our motive? Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.
  - Why is this too often not our motive? What interferes?
4. What are some grace-enabled ways to be useful? Discuss, and then read Romans 12: 6-8.
  - Read Philippians 2:3-4. How does this attitude in our service bring glory to God?
  - What is a personal by-product of being useful with the right motive and attitude? Read Psalm 132:16 and John 10:10.
5. Discuss these "rough edges". How are they smoothed through sanctification?
  - Planning our life. Read Proverbs 16:9.
  - Resenting adversity. Read Philippians 3:10. How does adversity help us grow stronger spiritually?
  - Wasting time. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1, and Ephesians 5:15-16.
  - Living materialistically. Read Luke 12:15-21.



SERIES 8 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 2: Refining One's Relationship with Those Who Went Before

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

### THEME

In a world that lacks any heroic context... in a world where indulgence and sin are exalted as heroic... in a world where fake heroes cannot fill the void in humans longing for patterns to follow... God provides an amazing resource in those who went before. The great heroic context waits for humble miners who will dig in and grow rich.

### OBJECTIVE

We take every advantage to learn from the past.

### ADEQUACY FOR PAST AND FUTURE

"Joy is not hypocrisy nor Pollyannaism. Joy is realistic. It knows that life is painted in light and dark colors – that it has its contrasts – but that growth can come in all these moods and times. Joy faces every situation with hope, faith, and a sure knowledge that there has been adequacy for the past and that same adequacy is available, and even more so, for the future."

—Fred Smith  
*You and Your Network*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we learn and grow from our predecessors in the faith.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. Read 1 Peter 1:10-12 together. There is a long historical context to our faith.
  - Describe an historical Christian figure whose influence you appreciate.
  - Read Proverbs 1:8-9. If you had believing parents, what instruction did you receive from them that has benefitted you?
2. What traits of those who have gone before us in the faith should we admire and emulate?
  - Read Hebrews 11:4-9. What was the defining characteristic of these people?
  - Read verses 13-16. What was their default perspective of their circumstances?
  - Have you ever considered, and striven for, the traits by which you want your life to be defined? Discuss the successes and challenges.
3. Read Romans 15:4. How can serious study of Old Testament characters such as those mentioned in Hebrews 11 help to shape our lives today?
4. Read Hebrews 11:39-40. What encouragement do you glean from this when you consider your present circumstances?
5. Hebrews 12:1-2 brings a balance to the study of other historical figures in the faith. Why is it important to look to Jesus as our primary role model?



SERIES 8 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 3: Refining One's Relationship with Friends

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NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Relationships bring pain. Anyone who says otherwise is selling something or believes social media is accurate. However, there are still important reasons to have friends and partners – not least that our relationships glorify God, who exists in Triune relationship. We must make friends, and do so wisely.

OBJECTIVE

We are friends who glorify God.

POP-PSYCHOLOGY PROMOTES SELF

"Pop psychology [is always producing] a new wave of self-help books that advocate asserting yourself, doing your own thing, taking advantage of the other person before the other person takes advantage of you, and telling anyone who does not give you what you 'need' in your relationship to get lost. The movement is never entirely new. Arrogance has been around for some time."

—Alan McGinnis  
*The Friendship Factor*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we glorify God with purposeful friendships.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. What is the difference between an acquaintance you've known for years and a good friend?
  - Read Proverbs 27:17. How can friendships make you a better person?
  - Read Romans 15:5-6. How can friendships glorify God?
2. Why should we nurture good friendships?
  - Read Proverbs 27:6. What does it mean by "the wounds of a friend"?
  - Read verse 9. Describe a time when you benefitted from the wise advice of a friend.
3. What traits are important in a good friend?
  - Read Proverbs 27:6. What does it mean by "the wounds of a friend"?
  - Read verse 9. Describe a time when you benefitted from the wise advice of a friend.
4. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and Matthew 5:37.
  - What is the danger of being business partners with one who is not a believer?
  - What are the effects of good friends who are like-minded believers?
5. Read Deuteronomy 13:6-8.
  - Which relationship should be our most important one? Why?
  - How does putting God first in your life make you a good friend candidate? Discuss how Galatians 5:22 applies to friendships.
6. Read Proverbs 27:17 again.
  - How do common uses of technology today work against the principle in this verse?
  - Why does friendship require true engagement? What are some ways to make that happen?



SERIES 8 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



## Session 4: Refining Relationships in the Home

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Each person has inherent relationships built in through family. Each relationship in the family brings opportunities to grow – opportunities that must not be missed.

OBJECTIVE

We grow through family.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week. Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

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This lesson was not available at the time of publication.  
Please check back for updates.

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SERIES 8 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



# Session 5: Refining Relationships with Difficult People

ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

There are problem people all around. They pop up in our churches, families, workplaces, governments, and even in the mirror. The main types that are operative today are the contentious, the fearful, those afflicted with mental illness, and deconstructionists. How should we respond? God calls us to firmness regarding right & wrong, compassion, and humility.

OBJECTIVE

We love rightly.

DECONSTRUCTION

“Scripture speaks strongly against those who destroy – not tearing down in order to rebuild better – no, the Bible decries the one who just deconstructs. Isaiah 21:2 is specifically addressing a judgment on Babylon, but it summarizes the problem and pain of deconstruction.”

—Wayne Braudrick

ISAIAH 21:2

“A troubling vision is declared to me: ‘The treacherous one acts treacherously, and the destroyer destroys.’”

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we love others rightly, especially when it’s not easy.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

1. Recall a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What did you learn about yourself through that experience?
2. Four challenging types of people were discussed: contentious, fearful, mentally ill, and deconstructionists.
  - With which of these do you find yourself avoiding relationships? Consider and describe why.
  - Read Proverbs 26:20-21. What does this teach us about dealing with contentious people?
  - Discuss effective ways of building a relationship with a believer who is habitually fearful. What about with a fearful unbeliever?
  - How should we speak, think, and act in our relationships with difficult people? Read Ephesians 4:29-32 together and discuss how to apply these verses to such relationships.
3. Read Proverbs 4:18-27. Why is it important to be firm regarding right and wrong when dealing with irregular people? What are the possible dangers if we are not firm?
4. Truth should not exclude love or compassion. Read Psalm 116:5.
  - Describe a time when it was hard for you to be compassionate while navigating a relationship with a difficult person.
  - Read 1 Kings 3:7 and Matthew 18:2-4. How does childlike humility aid us in being compassionate?
5. If you are currently dealing with a difficult person, how can this group pray for you?

