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WITH PS SHERYL BRADY

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This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow.

Use this guide, along with the DVDs and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

BEFORE YOU MEET:

Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.

Preview the DVD and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.

SETTING UP:

Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.

Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:

ENGAGE: Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the DVD or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

RECAP: After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.



WATCH: After you have spent some time engaging with each other watch the DVD for the week.

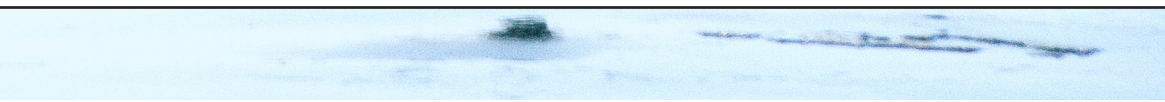
DISCUSS: Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

PRAY: Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

ACTIVATE: As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.





SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:

ENGAGE: 15 minutes

RECAP: 10 minutes

WATCH: 10 minutes

DISCUSS: 30 minutes

PRAY: 5-10 minutes

ACTIVATE: 5 minutes

(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)

KEYS TO A DYNAMIC eGROUP

Relationships: Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.

Availability: Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

Mutual Respect: Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

Openness: A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

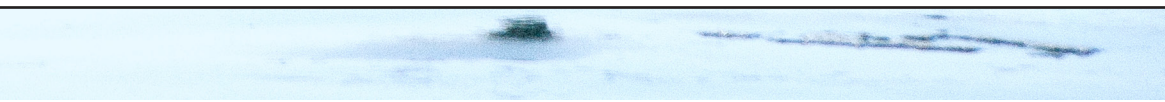
Confidentiality: To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.



Shared Responsibility: Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.

Sensitivity: Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the “agenda”. This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

Fun! Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!





ENCOUNTERING CHANGE

THE STORY OF RUTH

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

WATCH: Watch Session One of the DVD

DISCUSS:

“But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”

Ruth 1:16 (NIV)

This session is about the character of Ruth, and encountering change in our lives.

Question: When was the last time you experienced change? How did you respond?

Ruth was tired of being in Moab, (the place that ‘doesn’t require change’). She was ready to be challenged and receive more of God. In order to get this she needed to go beyond her comfort zone and be willing to make a change.

Question: Like Ruth, have you ever been so tired with where you were at, that you just had to make a change?



Naomi was a huge influence in Ruth's life. She was someone who was going somewhere, and Ruth was inspired to lay things down because of the impact she'd had on her life.

Question: Is there anyone in your world who's influenced or inspired you in a major way? What changes have you made in your life because of this influence?

The first thing we encounter when we go to the 'next level' is an altar of sacrifice. When Ruth moved with change, there was a cost attached to it.

Question: What was the price Ruth had to pay? Share an example of a good thing that's happened in your life, and the price you paid to receive it.

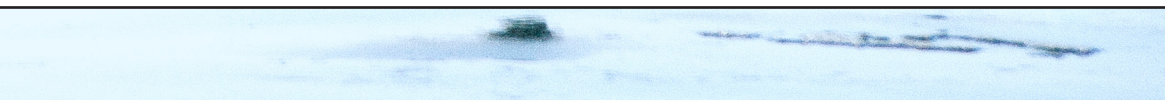
When Ruth stepped out in faith and took the risk, God not only revealed Himself, but He also revealed what was inside of her. Just as Ruth needed to get out of Moab, so we too need to move with change so that God can reveal what's inside of us.

Question: In light of this, what do you need to tell yourself to help welcome change the next time an opportunity for change comes?

PRAY: Pray for one another, that we'd be bold to take risks and move with change like Ruth. That we'd be inspired to make changes, not just for ourselves, but for what's inside of us.

ACTIVATE: Read the story of Ruth in the Bible, and reflect on the way she responded to change in her life, and how God provided for her.

In preparation for the next session, you might also like to read the story of Jacob's name change in Genesis 32:22-30.



WEEK TWO



WRESTLING FOR CHANGE

THE STORY OF JACOB

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

RECAP:

What spoke to you most about the character of Ruth last week? Did you encounter any opportunities to embrace change this week?

WATCH: Watch Session Two of the DVD

DISCUSS:

“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

Mark 8:34 (NIV)

Read Genesis 32:22-30. Jacob’s name meant ‘trickster and deceiver’, but he wrestled with God until his name was changed to Israel.

Question: What names or words, (good or bad), have been spoken over your life? What impact have those names had on you?

In order to become who God ordained him to be, Jacob had to wrestle and go through the process of dying to his ‘old self’.

Question: Have you ever had difficulty letting go of something in order to receive breakthrough?



The good thing about God is that He never gives up on us. He wrestled with Jacob until he changed.

Question: How does knowing that God will never give up on you impact the way you feel about entering seasons of change?

Read the key verse Mark 8:34 again. In applying this to our lives, a common thought is that we need to put energy and effort into decreasing, so that God will increase in us. However, Ps. Sheryl challenges us to think about this differently. She says that unless God increases in us, we can't decrease! The quicker we are to say 'Yes Lord!' and really mean it, the faster we can die to ourselves.

Question: What can we do to allow God to increase in our lives? What does it look like to 'deny ourselves'?

At one point Jacob took matters into his own hands. Unfortunately, the consequences of making decisions outside of God's timing is that we're often responsible for paying for them! There's a high cost to be paid when we're impatient.

Question: Have you ever experienced a situation where you know you went ahead with something outside of God's timing? What was the result?

In order to be positioned for the destiny God has for us, we need to be prepared to struggle. Part of this struggle is learning not to get ahead of the timing God has for our lives.

Question: What are some practical things we can do to not get ahead of God's timing?

PRAY: Break into pairs and discuss any areas of your life that you feel God is wanting you to wrestle with, so that what's inside of you can be revealed. Pray for one another, that we'd become all that we're meant to be in Him.

ACTIVATE: Reflect on the story of Jacob in Genesis 32:22-30, and think about how you can allow God to increase in you this week.

In preparation for the next session, you might like to read the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50.



KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

RECAP:

What was the purpose of Jacob's struggle with God? Did God reveal any areas of your life this week that He wants you to wrestle with?

WATCH: Watch Session Three of the DVD

DISCUSS:

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"

Romans 8:28 (NASB)

Joseph went through many trials, however, in the middle of them all he kept his dream alive. Ps. Sheryl assures us that when God gives us a dream, we can count on Him to bring that dream to pass. He did it for Joseph, and He can do it for you!

Question: When was the last time you were 'in the pits' or going through a hard time? How did you respond?

Ps. Sheryl talked about the fact that every thought that comes into our minds comes with an agenda. There are thoughts that move us closer to the purposes of God, and there are thoughts that take us away from them. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."



Question: What kinds of thoughts move us closer to God's purpose for our lives, and what kinds of thoughts pull us away from them?

Just as Joseph's brothers rejected his dream, there are people in our world who can sometimes 'shoot down' our dreams.

Question: Have you, (or anyone you know), ever shared dreams with someone, and their response wasn't what was hoped for?

Even in the pit, the favour of God remains. One minute Joseph was in the prison, and the next he was standing before Pharaoh. God has the ability to bring about change in our lives, regardless of where we may be at the time.

Question: How does knowing that God still favours you in the hard times encourage you?

Joseph didn't wait for a big audience to use his gift. He used it right then and there in the prison to help people. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."

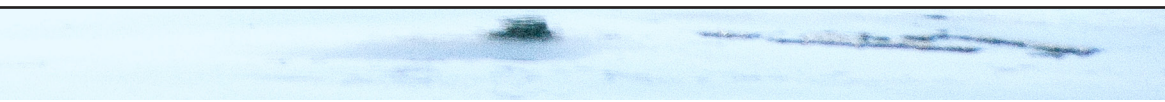
Question: What are some small things you have in your hand right now? How are you using them right now? Or are you waiting for a 'bigger and better' opportunity?

In Genesis 50:20 Joseph spoke the words "...You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...". He spoke these words to bring comfort to his brothers. Ps. Sheryl talked about how this attitude of kindness is a blessed way to live while waiting for the big picture to arrive.

Question: Are you good at listening to and encouraging others' dreams? While you're waiting for your dream to come about, can you think of people around you who need your support for their dream?

PRAY: Pray for one another, that we'd grasp the concept of God's favour being on us regardless of what we're going through. Pray that we'll trust God while waiting for our dreams to come to pass.

ACTIVATE: Read about Joseph in the Bible and reflect on how he remained faithful with the little during the ups and downs of reaching his dream.





TRUST GOD

'TRAINING IN PROGRESS'

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other

RECAP:

What was the biggest thing that stood out to you while learning about the life of Joseph? What small things did you do this week that may have helped others?

WATCH: Watch Session Four of the DVD

DISCUSS:

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

Ps. Sheryl shared the story of how she came to write her book. She said that there was something inside of her that she didn't know was there, and God used her past experiences to qualify her for where she is right now.

Question: Looking back on your life, were there any instances you realise now that God was training and qualifying you for where you are right now?

When God created the Earth, He spoke worlds into existence from nothing. He hovered and brooded over the face of the Earth, calling forth things that weren't visible with the natural eye. He does this for the purpose of drawing out what's inside of us, and allowing it to be made manifest.

Question: What kinds of things did Ps. Sheryl mention that might happen when God is 'brooding' over your life? Is this a comfortable process?



There are often times in life when things just don't make sense, and you may wonder if you've missed a turn somewhere. Ps. Sheryl shared about the time they lost the church they had birthed, and she thought she was going to lose her mind. In this, she had to learn to forgive the pain and the process.

Question: Have there ever been times in your life where you felt like you'd missed a turn, and things weren't going the way they should? What did you learn?

There are other times in life when God can then 'jump on the stage' and start pulling strings together. Just like a conductor when he raises his baton, God can turn what once was chaos into a beautiful sounding melody. To get to this place, forgiving the process is key.

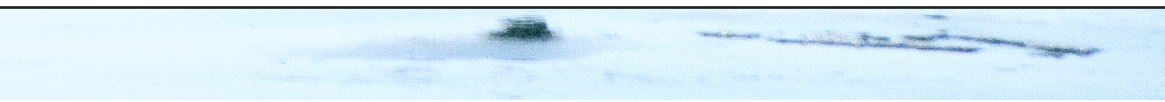
Question: Where in your life, or the life of someone you know, has God turned chaos into a beautiful melody?

Whatever we're going through, we can trust God in the middle of it all. Whatever He gets us into, He'll give us the grace to get through to the other side. God has a plan for our lives, as Philippians 1:6 says, "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Question: Does it encourage you to know that God is faithful to complete what He started in you? How can you approach 'training' sessions in the future knowing this?

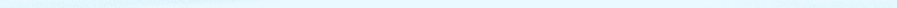
PRAY: Pray for one another, that we'd see that God has put something good inside us that He wants to bring out. Pray that in whatever we're going through, God will give us the grace and pull us out to the other side.

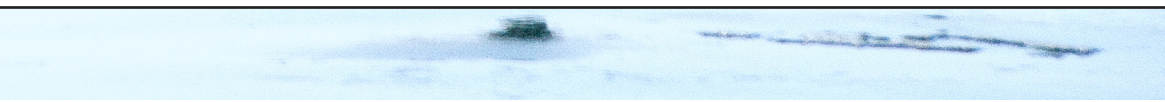
ACTIVATE: Pray and journal this week about what you've learned in these sessions. Continue to ask God to reveal the person inside of you that He wants made manifest - **You have it in you!**





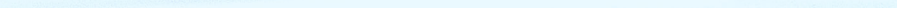
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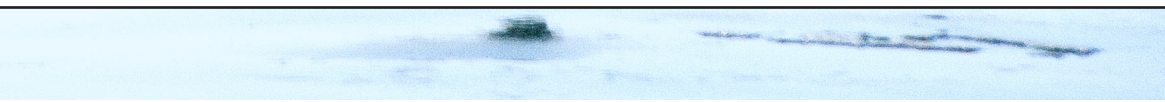






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