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WITH  
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# LEADER'S GUIDE:

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!



Week One:



# EXPERIENCING THE GOD OF 'MORE' DURING A STORM

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other

**WATCH:** Watch Session One of the DVD

**DISCUSS:**

*"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."*

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:17 (NIV)**

When going through a storm in life, we can sometimes feel that God is silent.

**Question: Have you ever felt like this? What did you think or feel at that time?**

This series is all about understanding that God is with us and for us, even in the midst of a storm.

**Question: What kinds of storms is Ps. Benny talking about? Do you have any other personal examples of storms?**

Read 2 Corinthians 4:17. In life we can experience trials of less, where we go through seasons of less or loss. Paul refers to them as light and momentary troubles. In the middle of it all, Ps. Benny says that God reveals Himself as the God of 'more'.

**Question: Discuss what Ps. Benny means by the God of 'more'. How is it that we can experience 'more' even while being in a season of less?**





Like sand being washed away in a storm, our faith can be eroded when we concentrate on what's happening to us, rather than looking to Jesus.

Ps. Benny explains that this happens when we start to live 'conditionally', (by our sight and senses), rather than 'positionally', (by faith).

**Question: What are some signs of our faith eroding, and how could we counteract this?**

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that God is going to keep us from storms. However, it does say that He'll be with us in the midst of storms. Ps. Benny illustrated this as he told of his family experiencing a storm at their home in Las Vegas. Even though the intensity of the storm didn't change, the proximity of the Father did.

**Question: What comforted you about this story? What changes in us when we position ourselves close to the Heavenly Father when going through storms?**

**PRAY:** Pray for one another, that we would know the proximity of the Father in whatever we're going through. Pray for His peace and for an understanding that His presence is greater than the presence of any problems.

**ACTIVATE:** Read the story of Paul going through the storm in Acts 27 and 28:1-10. (This story is referred to frequently during the next three sessions).



Week Two:



# STAYING WITH THE SHIP

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other

**RECAP:**

**What did you get out of reading the story of Paul going through the storm in Acts 27 and 28?**

**WATCH:** Watch Session Two 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)***

This session is all about staying with the ship and not jumping off when we go through trials. Sometimes we don't have enough perspective to stay on course when we're in the middle of a trial, and we need someone to help us 'stay with the ship'.

**Question: Do you have an experience of how an outside voice was able to help you when going through a situation or a storm?**

Read Acts 27:21-25. Even though the storm was raging all around them, Paul held onto the promise that they would be saved. This promise was his anchor in the midst of everything.

**Question: What are some promises or scriptures that have anchored you when going through storms?**

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." God operates by knowing the end from the beginning. Just because we're in the middle of something, doesn't mean we're going to stay there. If He's started something in our lives, it indicates that He knows that He can finish it.

**Question: What have you started in life, but struggled to complete? Do you believe God can finish what He's started in you?**



When going through a storm, we can often feel like insulating or isolating ourselves. Ps. Benny says that it's important not to pull away, but to hang on to the parts of the ship.

**Question: What are the four parts of the ship we need to hold onto? Choose one part of the ship to discuss, and share the importance of holding on to this when going through storms.**

God isn't intimidated by our natural reaction to panic in situations, however Scripture does say that we shouldn't allow panic to become a pattern in our lives.

**Question: What happens when we allow our emotions to dictate our response in a situation? What can we do instead?**

**PRAY:** Break into pairs and pray for each other. Pray particularly for anything that may be holding us back from trusting in God. Pray that God would give us a new perspective when going through storms.

**ACTIVATE:** Think about one part of the ship you can try holding onto more this week. Spend some time praying for people in your eGroup this week.



Week Three:



# THE CALM WITHIN THE STORM

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other

**RECAP:**

**Did you ponder any parts of the ship you could hang on to more? Did it impact your week at all?**

**WATCH:** Watch Session Three of the DVD

**DISCUSS:**

*"That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."*

**Mark 4:35 (NIV)**

Read Mark 4:35-41. In this passage, Jesus appears to knowingly lead them into a storm. But Ps. Benny says there's something more important we can focus on from this story.

**Question: What is the primary thought in this scripture that we should focus on? Why is it important to focus on this truth?**

When going through hard times, we can sometimes think we need to 'white knuckle' it and just stay positive and try harder to get through.

**Question: Have you ever felt like this? Describe a situation.**

Ps. Benny talked about Christianity not being about denial, but declaration. It doesn't help when we discount our feelings and emotions in the midst of a storm, but we can declare that God is bigger than our situations and feelings, and believe for more.

**Question: Do you know someone who's going through a hard time? What can you do to support them whilst being sensitive to what they're going through?**

With respect to our attitudes in the midst of storms, Ps. Benny says that it's 'right believing' that will lead to 'right living'. When we check our thoughts, and line them up with scripture, we begin to think the way God wants us to think.



**Question:** Since the last session, are there any scriptures or promises you've grabbed a hold of that could help when you encounter a storm? What's the importance of holding on to these?

Our faith shouldn't be in our own faith, or in being strong or positive or obedient enough to handle things, our faith just needs to be in Jesus. When our storm is too big for us to handle, Jesus is big enough to handle our storm.

**Question:** Have you ever experienced this 'calm within a storm' where you realised that all you needed was to trust Jesus?

**PRAY:** Pray for one another, that we would gain fresh revelation of God being with us in everything. Pray that we would know He's enough, and that we don't need to rely on our own strength.

**ACTIVATE:** Ask God to help you identify any areas where you're 'white knuckling it', or putting on a brave face. Allow Him into that space this week and ask for His help and for a fresh perspective.



Week Four:



# WE'VE ALREADY WON

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other

**RECAP:**

**Were there any moments this week that you remember making a significant decision to trust God rather than trusting in your own strength?**

**WATCH:** Watch Session Four of the DVD

**DISCUSS:**

*"Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us"*

**2 Corinthians 1:9-10 (NIV)**

Some teachings say that storms come to those who are 'outside the will of God'. Ps. Benny assures us that God isn't the author of storms, and that He's a loving Heavenly Father.

**Question: Have you come across this 'outside the will of God' perspective? What's your response to it?**

In Acts 27 and 28 we read about the struggles Paul went through on his journey to Malta. On the other side of the storm there were many people who were impacted. He ministered to over 200 people on the boat, and a revival broke out on the island. In his tragedy, God positioned Paul to bring encouragement and hope to others.

**Question: Do you know of anyone who's made a great impact on the other side of their storm?**

We can often put emphasis on getting our victory, rather than understanding that, regardless of the result, we've already won! Our victory isn't in the result, but rather in what Christ has already done.

**Question: Does this perspective challenge your thinking? Why?**



Read Acts 28:1-6. In this story, Paul wasn't just shaking off the viper, he was shaking off the opinions of people. At times when you face a storm, people may judge you and believe the storm is your fault. But we must base our view of the situation on who God is, not on what people say.

**Question: Have you ever had to shake off the opinions of others?**

Ps. Benny illustrated that the snake didn't kill Paul because the Blood of the Lamb, (Jesus Christ), was more powerful than the venom of the viper. Jesus, and His presence in your life, is much more powerful than any attack on you.

**Question: How does knowing that Jesus is fighting for you, and not against you, change your view of storms?**

**PRAY:** Pray for each other, that we would know all the good things God's done for us. Pray that in the midst of storms we can experience the God of 'more', which is greater than all we're facing.













EQUIPPERS 

