



Beyond
CHRISTMAS
2019

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SESSION 1

Beyond the Daily Grind

We begin with a war in heaven. These angels are ready for anything. Are we? Can you even begin to imagine that angels are on our side? How do we press on when life presses in?

CONVERSATION STARTER

- If you could immediately gain one new skill, what would it be?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend's service?

Together, open your Bibles and read from Ephesians 6:10-20 and watch Session 1.

In Ephesians 6:10-20, Paul reminds us that we are in a spiritual battle. We get caught up living life that we forget about the spiritual battle in the heavenly realms. What does it look like for us to go beyond the daily grind? As followers of Jesus, we are called to stand firm in the midst of the battle by God's power, with the armor of God, and to live in constant prayer.

- What are some of your initial thoughts and reflections from Ephesians 6:10-20?
- Who does Paul say we are struggling against in Ephesians 6? What does this struggle look like in everyday life?
- Where do we get our strength from? How do we receive this strength?

- How do you become more aware of the spiritual realities that surround us on a daily basis?
- How do you practically follow Paul’s advice in putting on the armor of God?
- What are some things in your life that you have grown complacent about spiritually?
- What are some things you could do to start off your day on the right foot?
- What evidence do you see of the battle in your life? Your church? Your community? The world?
- What would it mean for you “to stand firm” in these particular areas?
- How do these verses apply to your life? What will you do about it?

PRAISE & PRAYER POINTS

Spend some time praying for each other’s prayer requests and share what God is doing in your life.

SESSION 2

Beyond the Unanswered Prayer

A life of unanswered prayer. A life of quiet defeat. A life of dwindling faith. And then hope bursts through. Are you waiting and hoping for God to answer a prayer?

CONVERSATION STARTER

- Do you usually travel for Christmas? If so, where do you go?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend's service?

Together, open your Bibles and read from Luke 1:5-25 then watch Session 2.

Even in the silence and the unanswered prayer God is at work. He is faithful to His promises.

- What are some of your initial thoughts and reflections from Luke 1:5-25?
- If you are with others and there is silence, is it comfortable or uncomfortable for you? Why?
- What is the longest period of time that you felt God was silent in your life? Describe it for us.
- What are some of your unanswered prayers?
- Take a moment and read **Galatians 4:4-5**. What do these verses tell us about God's timing? What was God waiting for?
- When was the last time you doubted God? What caused your doubt?

SESSION 3

Beyond the Impossible

The angel brings incredible news that makes the impossible credible. Faith is quickened when this woman, Mary, learns to say yes. Can we believe for the impossible today? Can we do what God asks us to do? How can we trust God, like Mary, with the impossible?

CONVERSATION STARTER

- Who do you greatly admire and why?
- What have you been told about the events surrounding your birth?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend's service?

Together, open your Bibles and read from Luke 1:26-38 then watch Session 3.

The fact that God became one of us and lived among us is one of the greatest miracles. He didn't come as so many thought He would, but as a little baby in a manger born of a virgin. From impossible to possible.

- What are some of your initial thoughts and reflections from Luke 1:26-38?
- How do you think Mary felt about giving birth to the Messiah?
- What are some characteristics of Mary that stand out to you and why?

- What were some possible issues that might come up in Mary's life when she submits to God's plan?
- What if anything does this have to do with her humility and submissiveness to God?
- What would it take for you to spend more time in reflection and contemplation of God and His will in your life?
- In what areas of your life do you need to believe that "nothing is impossible with God"? What keeps you from believing him?
- Is God calling you to do something special for Him? If so, what is it?
- How do these verses apply to your life? What will you do about it?

PRAISE & PRAYER POINTS

Spend some time praying for each other's impossible prayers and share what God is doing in your life.

SESSION 4

Beyond What They Think

Joseph took his responsibilities seriously. And then God asked for something outrageous. Was he up for it? Just what would people think?

CONVERSATION STARTER

- Do you know how your parents picked your name? What does your name mean?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend's service?

Together, open your Bibles and read from Matthew 1:18-25, then watch Session 4.

Matthew 1:18-25 captures the birth of Jesus Christ. We also get a glimpse into the challenges that Joseph was facing with his wife to be.

- What are some of your initial thoughts and reflections from Matthew 1:18-25?
- What challenges and pressures do you think Joseph and Mary may have faced in order to remain faithful to God?

Picture yourself as Joseph ...

- What emotions or feelings come to mind? What are you thinking about? How do you relate to Joseph's experience?
- How would you feel if you were in Joseph's place? What would you say to your family and friends?

- What does this passage tell us about Joseph’s character?
- Can you recall a time that God has called you to do something that truly challenged your faith? What was that experience like? How did you respond?

Read **Matthew 1:21** several times, stopping after each word or phrase.

- Which words or phrases stand out most prominently to you? How does this verse shape the way you read the rest of this Gospel?
- When did you last take a leap of faith like Joseph? When did you make that choice to trust God?
- How has God invited you to be a part of what He is doing?
- How do these verses apply to your life? What will you do about it?

PRAISE & PRAYER POINTS

Spend some time praying for each other’s prayer requests and share what God is doing in your life.



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