

# SOAR

Discipleship Study

## **WELCOME to SOAR!**

When we **SOAR**, we:

Seek God  
Obtain Truth  
Abide in the Spirit  
Reach Out

Spiritual growth begins and is maintained with intimate fellowship with the Living God through Jesus Christ. **SOAR** (a four-part study consisting of eight lessons each) is designed to foster that relationship through discipleship. Soaring in Christ is the outcome of seeking God, obtaining and abiding in His Truth and reaching out.

Let's look at the key Scriptures we will explore in our time together.

### **SEEK GOD**

#### **Know God intimately**

*"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."* Luke 10:27

*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* Matthew 6:33

### **OBTAIN TRUTH**

#### **Find freedom in God's Word**

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* John 8:32

*"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."* Romans 10:17

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."* Romans 12:2

### **ABIDE**

#### **Live from the Spirit of God**

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Galatians 2:20

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.* Galatians 5:25

### **REACH OUT**

#### **Share the Good News**

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his field."* Matthew 9:37

*"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Matthew 28:18-20

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV), and other Scripture references are from the Amplified Bible (AMP), New Living Translation (NLT), King James Version (KJV), American Standard Bible (ASB), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the New King James Version (NKJV). All emphasis added.

### ***A note from Amy Groeschel***

To the beloved in Christ,

Suffering, failure, frustration, weariness, worldliness, selfishness, and disappointment...most of us can relate to these experiences. Life can be so hard at times. Praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ; He is our Rock, Refuge and Comforter! Our Heavenly Father has told us to come to Him when we are weary and heavy-laden and He will give us *rest*. He wants us to learn to walk with Him so He can speak to us through His Word and His Spirit. He wants us to run with perseverance the race He's marked out before us. He wants us to be renewed and **SOAR** with Him!

The **SOAR** Study that you are about to begin was born out of a vision from God, a call to disciple, and a LOVE for you. That's right. My love, Sheri's love, but infinitely greater, God's love for *you*! Sheri and I believe that these four, eight-week studies will take you to a deeper level with God. Our prayer is that you'll be on fire and madly in love with your God. This study is simple. It is going to get you in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit will be the ultimate teacher. If you give yourself to this journey, you will never be the same! We are honored to be a part of building you up to a fuller maturity in Christ Jesus.

*"The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:28-31*

Loving you and Loving Him,  
Amy Groeschel

Dear friends,

As an abused child, my desperate mission was to try to find my worth and value in anything—excelling in school, working hard at my job, friends, boys/men, parents, family, college, and my career. It was like there was a hole in the bottom of my heart! All things fell short. Nothing—no job—no person—no possession—no amount of money or vindication can bring peace into our lives!

God is in the redemption business. Today, I am healed and restored in every way. I am free! I am alive! The redemption of Christ is also available to you. He wants you to be well, to prosper you, and not to harm you in anyway.

Amy and I pray for you to know Him and His will for your life so intimately that you see His fingerprints all over your life, live by the Spirit in every way, and burn with passion for Him, ...to SOAR with Him all the days of your life. And, in return, change the world one life at a time!

*"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." 2 Corinthians 3:17*

Love in Christ,  
Sheri

## SEEK GOD STUDY OUTLINE

### Seek God with your HEART

**Week 1:** Seek to know and love God. Turn your burdens and wounds over to God and seek Him.

### Seek God with your EYES and MIND

**Week 2:** Seek to know God's character through the Word.

**Week 3:** Seek to know God's names and character.

**Week 4:** Seek to know God the Creator.

### Seek God with your LIPS

**Week 5 -** Seek to know God through prayer.

### Seek God with your EARS

**Week 6:** Seek to know God through prayer that rests, listens and delights in His presence.

### Seek God with your KNEES

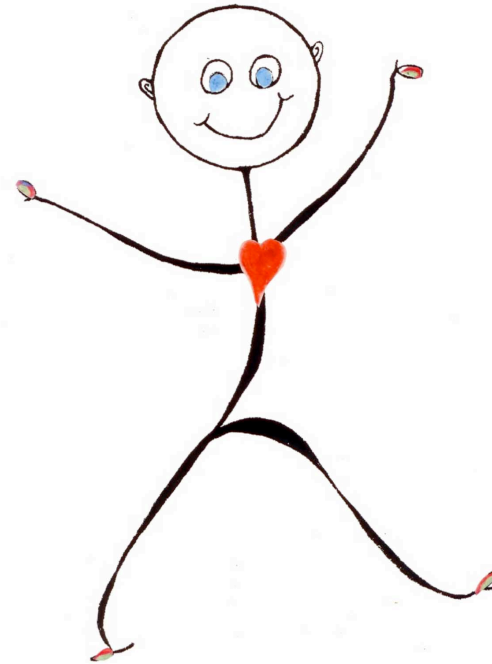
**Week 7:** Seek to know God through intercessory prayer, petitions, and faith

### Seek God with your HANDS and LIPS

**Week 8:** Seek to know God through worship

### Seek God with ALL of YOU!

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Mark 12:30*



### Seek God with ALL of YOU!

All Your Heart  
All Your Mind  
All Your Eyes  
All Your Lips  
All Your Ears  
All Your Knees  
All Your Hands

Find us as [www.soarwithgod.com](http://www.soarwithgod.com)

## SOAR STUDY APPROACH

Each week includes five segments:

<b>LEAD!</b>	Leader preparation
<b>SHARE!</b>	Group time
<b>EAT!</b>	Spiritual Nourishment
<b>SERVE!</b>	Give back
<b>LIVE!</b>	Fellowship

### **LEAD!** Leader preparation

Leaders, you were called for a time such as this! We want you to lead your group, build equity with them and become an even more sold-out follower of Christ yourself just from spending time with Him and obtaining truth! We have a section in the back to help you prepare each week.

Pray and ask God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know Him more and wisdom to lead your group. Go through the entire week of material and allow the Lord to give you insight.

### **SHARE!** Group time

Here are some suggestions some things to include in your small group time:

- Discuss the previous week's homework.
- Ice Breakers are a great way to build connections and intimacy within the group.
- Pray together.
- Share the 25-35 minute video teaching with your group.
- Make sure to have available copies of this week's EAT! sections for each of your participants.
- Encourage your group to bring their Bibles.

We encourage you to be transparent with your own personal examples so that your group will follow your example.

### **EAT!** Spiritual Nourishment

This is your daily spiritual nourishment. Think of it as being as vital to your well being as the food you eat: without it, you would die. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry..."(John 6:35). The EAT section will give you some new tools to obtain Truth for yourself. Please don't let these tools lay idle. You will reap what you sow. Taking notes will cause you to slow down and give you more time to reflect and look closely at Scripture.

The "Crave" section is for those who crave even more Truth. Use this section after you have completed the daily homework.

### **SERVE!** Give back

If God reveals a truth to you, share it. Don't keep it to yourself! Serve is designed so that you, the leader, can identify service opportunities within the group, in the community, or within the church. If someone you know needs prayer, take your group to pray with him or her. If someone has a family member at a nursing home, take your group there. Maybe you could even go on a mission trip together! Check with your church mission's leader for more ideas.

### **LIVE!** Fellowship

Do life together! Spend time together just talking about the Lord and all the good things He has done. Pray for one another. Throw parties and have dinner together. Share in Communion. Talk about His names and character traits. Bask in fellowship with others that hunger for Jesus.

## **SEEK GOD**

### **LEAD! Leader Notes**

#### **WEEK 1**

**LEAD!** Welcome leaders! What an awesome journey you are starting. Be encouraged that God will and is already using you to train up the body of Christ. We are praying for you! There is an introduction video that we encourage you to share. Prepare an icebreaker, get to know one another, and have fun!

**SERVE!** This week, serve one another. Encourage one another daily and bind up the broken-hearted. Leaders, consider having your group phone each other throughout the week to facilitate this.

**LIVE!** The first few weeks of meeting together are imperative to the trust in the group. Consider having a few weeks prior to starting to just get to know one another. Another idea is to have a meal together or a strong icebreaker.

#### **WEEK 2**

**LEAD!** We hope you are enjoying leading your group through SOAR – Seek God! Be sure to pray for the members of your group. This week, the video is short and we are talking about roadblocks to seeking God. Be prepared to share your own roadblocks. There are many group questions this week. In a larger group size, it might be difficult go through all the questions. Decide beforehand if you want the group to meet in one large group or smaller groups and which questions you want to present to the group.

**SERVE!** This week, share a name or character trait of God with a family member. This is good practice to give back out what you have taken in. We don't have to have a degree in theology to share with others.

**LIVE!** Consider having a fellowship to just sit and share all the names and character traits of God that you have been learning about.

#### **WEEK 3**

**LEAD!** This is one of my favorite weeks! I love knowing God better through His word. Prepare an activity: As people come into your group, have everyone put on two nametags: One tag for the given name and the other for a nickname. This week, you are going to search the Scriptures for the character traits and names of God. We have a great video (approx. 7 minutes.) from Craig Groeschel on knowing God. Prepare this week by going through the Scriptures and the character chart, so that you will be able to give the participants examples before you start. We used the alphabet to see how many names we could find. You can use this method or whatever method works for you.

**SERVE!** This week plan a mission trip together for the end of week 8 so you can plan to share all that you are learning with someone who you don't know.

**LIVE!** Ask your group to engage one another in one-on-one time together outside the group.

## WEEK 4

**LEAD!** Have you ever witnessed a child explore and find new things (things we totally take for granted) with such awe and wonder? Well, this week, we are going to look at God the Creator with the eyes of a child. We want to encourage you to love your group right where they are and celebrate every transformation and success!

**SERVE!** Clean up an area park or something in nature together so you can continue to see and celebrate God, the Creator!

**LIVE!** Plan a day trip or activity for some outdoor fun.

## WEEK 5

**LEAD!** This week, we embark on a three-week journey, studying prayer. We will go through, 1) prayer basics, 2) resting and listening to God, and 3) powerful prayers. We have a video from the Prayer series at Lifechurch.tv. It is about 25 minutes, so plan your time carefully. If you don't watch the video as a group, be sure to watch it in advance so you can share the basics with your group. We are in week five, so encourage real transparency by setting the example. Keep seeking to know God deeply!

**SERVE!** Pray together on the phone or for others whom you see have a need outside your group.

**LIVE!** Grab coffee, dinner or just do something fun together.

## WEEK 6

**LEAD!** We hope you are encouraged by how your group is being transformed in this journey. Be sure to keep celebrating together all the revelation God is bringing forth. In Romans 1:12, Paul says that they were mutually encouraged. I love this because as

leaders, is it so encouraging when the people we are leading start to truly get it! Enjoy the journey. This week plan for: 1) a short video and 2) about 20-40 minutes for individual reflection time, to be still and know that He is God! Consider making places in your home available for private time with the Lord.

**SERVE!** Hold each other accountable to how well you are maintaining your quiet time. Serve someone this week quietly by praying for them.

**LIVE!** This week, consider having communion together. In an attitude of prayer, together, take the time to just sit and patiently list all the names and character traits of God.

## WEEK 7

**LEAD!** Today, we have the opportunity to pray together. We have a video of Amy and Sheri talking about their prayer journeys. It took us 30 minutes to make this short video. We laughed till we cried. I am sorry if you don't have access to the bloopers! If you prep your group before you start the video, the video will lead you straight into praying with each other. If you don't have a prayer partner, pray and ask God to bring you one. Try to encourage your group members to do so as well.

**SERVE!** If you know of someone who needs prayer at the hospital, plan to go as a group to pray with this person.

**LIVE!** Take two weeks to go through the EAT section of week seven. In the week where there is no lesson, enjoy each other's fellowship during group time. This is a great time to assess the progress of your group. For me (Sheri), I ask myself, "Am I gaining altitude with God?" Assess where your group is this week and determine if you want to repeat one or more weeks.

## WEEK 8

**LEAD!** Worship this week! We have a worship DVD for your group. We hope that the hearts of everyone are turning toward worshipping God above everything else in this world. Your group can choose to only worship, worship first, or worship last and still do the SHARE! questions. If you chose to not go through the SHARE! section, we recommend that you encourage your group to read through it at home.

We are wrapping up SEEK God this week. Plan a meal together to share all that God is doing. We want you to use all that you are learning and serve others by praying for others, pouring into someone else that doesn't have these truths, or whatever God is calling you to do individually.

**SERVE!** Worship God with your time. Get your mission trip completed soon. Be sure to share your testimony how God has changed your life!

**LIVE!** Worship together with some of the following:

- Read the Bible aloud.
- Read an entry in your **SOAR** Notebook.
- Sing songs of praise to God.
- Pick something that suits your style of worship.



**SEEK GOD – Week 1**  
**“Know and Love God”**  
**SHARE!**

**Objective:** To turn your burdens over to God and to seek to know and love Him with all your heart.

**Key Verse:** *“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30*

**GOD LONGS FOR YOU TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY**

When you were born, someone cared for you. You slept, ate, cried and pooped (yes, you did – everyone poops!). You couldn't do *anything*. You could only rest and be nurtured. As you spent time with your family, you connected with them and built a relationship.

Some of us had wonderful relationships and others had painful ones. My (Sheri) family life had some hard challenges. However, there is good news for those of us that had painful family experiences...when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are adopted into His family! You are now born of God. Read *John 1:13*. This verse means so much to me because it clarifies that I am in God's family and that adoption cannot be annulled!

It is time to get to know God the Father just like you got to know your family. God is your lifeline in this new life. You need to rest in Him and allow Him to take your burdens. Spend time with Him today!

God has pursued a relationship with mankind since the creation of the world. First, He created us, breathed His own life into us,

walked with us, dwelt among us after the fall of man and then made a way for us to know Him personally again through sending His Son to shed His blood as the final sacrifice for us. Yet most of us only know about God. We don't really know Him in a personal and intimate way.

There is a difference in knowing about someone and knowing someone personally. Most of us know about the President of our country, but we don't know him personally. On the other hand, if you are married, hopefully you know your spouse intimately.

**What can we do to know God like this?**

**YOU MUST SEEK GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART**

There can be many hindrances that keep us from intimacy. You might have been wounded by someone or something that has caused your heart to be closed or hesitant toward God. Maybe you think you are not good enough for Him. Maybe you've been deceived and have turned your heart to something or someone other than God. Whatever it is, you can overcome it through Christ Jesus. When our heart is wounded, angry, bitter, or closed to people, then our heart is most likely closed to God also.

Have you ever put up a wall and shut off your heart to someone? I certainly have! The truth is, holding onto our wounds and pain really only hurts us. We need to bring the pain and wounds out of hiding and into the Light so that we can begin to open our hearts back up to God.

To seek God with all of your heart you have to . . .

- Be willing to open your heart to Him.
- Ask God for His help!

## GROUP SHARE TIME

Break into groups of two.

Read one or more of these passages to each other:

*Luke 11:45-46; Psalm 139:1-7; Matthew 11:28-30*

- What heavy load are you carrying around?
- What is distracting you from seeking God?

Write down those things—put them in an envelope addressed to God. Commit to the group to not pick them back up. Hang the envelope at home somewhere to remember that your life is now hidden in Christ Jesus.

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Gather back as a group:

- Share your responses
  - Pray for and minister to one another
- 

You will need to have a **SOAR** notebook.

**SEEK GOD – Week 2**  
**“Know God’s Character”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 1 Review Question:** What burden did you lay down to seek God more?

**Objective:** Seeking to know God’s character through the Word

**Key Verse:** *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21*

Have you ever won a grand prize, door prize or anything? One year at the state fair, when I (Sheri) was a child, I won three large prizes. I played games the rest of the evening for free because everyone who saw my prizes asked me to try and win them a prize too. It was fun! I didn’t even consider giving one of them away or sharing them with my little sister. They were my treasure. Like Matthew 6:21 says, “My heart was there also.”

Think about what you have treasured in your life—maybe a wedding ring, a new car, your first home, a child, a spouse, your work, or maybe you even won the lottery. All of those treasures pale in comparison to the love of God through Jesus Christ. He is the greatest treasure!

Get real and be honest. Right now what is your greatest treasure? What are you seeking? What does your heart and mind continually turn to? The answer probably lies in how you spend your time and money. Look at the way Jesus said it in our key verse.

*“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”*  
*Matthew 6:33*

Our goal, our aim, our yearning desire should be to know Christ! So why don’t we pursue and desire God more? Like me, maybe you have roadblocks that keep you from seeking God.

**What are some roadblocks?**

**Roadblock 1 – Too busy:** “I want to make time for God, but I just don’t have time!” If we really want to do something, we will make time for it. If this is you, then God is not first. Ouch! We must **plan** time to seek God.

I am a busy mom of three children whom I home school. Sometimes, I get so busy that I when I do stop, I realize that I have not even acknowledged God’s presence with me. Whether we realize it or not, God is present all the time because he lives in us through the Holy Spirit. How do I get over this roadblock? I just acknowledge God like a member of our family. We talk about or talk to God all day long—throughout our schoolwork, eating, watching a movie, or interacting with other people. We just include Him in everything instead of making Him an additional thing that we do.

**Roadblock 2 – Disobedience:** Christ makes us holy, but disobedience and sin causes our heart to harden to God. Our hard-heartedness is a roadblock to experiencing the fullness of Him. Fully surrendering our lives to Him sets us free.

**Roadblock 3 – Apathetic:** Maybe you think, “I’ve tried quiet time with God and it wasn’t so great.” So, you gave up. This was my life for a long time. I would pray for a minute and be bored. I didn’t feel anything, nor get anything out of my time. I was lukewarm. How I got past this was through reading the Bible. As I read the Bible and learned who God was, I longed to know Him more, pray more, and spend more time with Him.

## How can you and I eliminate these roadblocks?

- **Tell God about it.** Tell Him you want to desire and love Him more. Continue praying until your heart changes. Seek Him and you will find Him. Celebrate the small ways you see God break down roadblocks!
- **Make God your daily nourishment.** Jesus is the Bread of Life. He is the Living Water. Does your body require daily food and water? Sure it does! Your spirit is no different. Nourish it daily. And if you're wondering how to nourish your spirit, start simple: pray, read the bible, and turn your thoughts to God.

## GROUP SHARE TIME

Your treasure map to know God better is right in front of you. It is the Bible. Let's open it!

## BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS

Read the Key verse (*Matthew 6:21*) aloud.

- If a newspaper reporter observed you all day today, based on the way you spent your day, what would they list on the front page of the paper as your **Greatest Treasure**?
- What steps can you take tomorrow to make Jesus Christ your Greatest Treasure?
- Name your Roadblocks
- Is God scheduled daily in your life? Do you have a planned time to meet with God or do you fit Him in when it's convenient? If you have a scheduled time, are you keeping it? If not, schedule God in your calendar. Tell each other

about your scheduled time, commit to it, and hold each other accountable.

- Be real and transparent with each other. Confess your lack of seeking Him to one another and pray for and encourage each other.
- Celebrate each other's successes as your daily walk with God transforms and improves.

Gather back as a group to share what you found.

## Go on a Treasure Hunt!

- Read a passage and list below the character traits of God that you find. *Psalms 83; Matthew 5; John 17; Psalm 99; Psalm 103; Ephesians 1*

**SEEK GOD – Week 3**  
**“Know God’s Names and Character”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 2 Review Question:** Name one of God’s character traits that meant the most to you this past week. Explain.

**Objective:** Seeking to know God’s names and character

**Key Verse:** *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3*

It’s easy to know about people, but it is harder to know them personally. For example, if I saw Craig, Senior Pastor of Lifechurch.tv, and ran up to say “hi,” he might look at me with that, “and you must be \_\_\_?\_\_\_” look. Then, it would dawn on me that I know him, but he doesn’t know me. There is a difference in knowing about someone and really knowing them—having a relationship with them.

There is a verse like this in Matthew: *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” Matthew 7:21-23*

Clearly, knowing God is what life is all about!

**Let’s examine how we can seek to know God more intimately.**

Names and nicknames tell a little bit about who we are or how others may see us. I (Sheri) had many nicknames when I was growing up, like short-stuff (because I was short, but powerful), and motor mouth (because I never stopped talking).

**Fellowship and Ice Breaker:** Have everyone share how they got their names and nicknames.

**Do you know God has many names?** They tell us more about who He is. Some are endearing like a sweet expression of love (**Comforter** or **Father**). As we get to know God through seeking His names and character traits throughout the Word, it will bring us into a fuller, more intimate relationship with Him.

**So, how do you get to know God?** To keep it simple, I like to relate it to how I get to know a new friend. In your group, make a list or just discuss how you would get to know a new friend.

If we seek to know God in the Word—like we would complete a word search game—we will find God’s names that define his character. Let’s dig in!

## GROUP SHARE TIME

Look up *John 10*. Make a list of character traits revealed in these verses.

Names and Character of God	Verse
Authority	
Calls you by name	3
Full Life	10
Gate	7
Goes ahead of you	4
Good Shepherd	2
He speaks - His voice can be heard	3
Lays down his life	11
Leads you	3
Obeys the Father's commands - sinless	18
Provider (finds pasture - food - provision)	9
Savior	9
Takes up His life - resurrection	17
Unity - one flock and one shepherd	16

Celebrate God's wonderful names and character!

### **Week 3 - NAMES AND CHARACTER OF GOD**

**Post this – Dwell on Him.**

MOST HIGH GOD	DELIVERER	FORTRESS
CREATOR	I AM!	ABBA FATHER
THE LORD MY BANNER	ALL-KNOWING	ABUNDANT
PROVIDER	ABOVE ALL	BEGINNING
RESTORER	BRIDEGROOM	BREAD OF LIFE
THE LORD OF LORDS	JUST	IMMANUEL
KING OF KINGS	JESUS!	LAMB OF GOD
EVERLASTING GOD	LOVE	LIVING WATER
SHEPHERD	COMFORTER	PROTECTED
HEALER	DWELLING PLACE	FRIEND
MASTER	REDEEMER	TEACHER
ALL-SUFFICIENT ONE	SHEPHERD	WAY
SAVIOR	PROTECTOR	OMNISCIENT
TRUTH	NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES	NEAR
EQUIPPER	HOLY	GOOD
PRINCE OF PEACE	RIGHTEOUS	MERCIFUL
FAITHFUL	UNCHANGING	OMNIPOTENT
OMNIPRESENT	SOVEREIGN	PURSUER

**Challenge: Can you list more names or character traits of God from the reading this week?**

**SEEK GOD – Week 4**  
**“Know God the Creator”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 3 Review Question:** How did God reveal Himself to you last week?

**Objective:** Seeking to know God the Creator

**Key Verse:** *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” Psalm 19:1*

**IN THE BEGINNING**

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”  
Genesis 1:1*

God created the world and all of its contents. He created **you**. God created all the resources for everything our eyes can see today. Have you taken a fresh look around to see God’s handiwork?

**GROUP SHARE TIME**

This week we are going to stop and smell the roses. We all need to slow down our pace and appreciate the gift of life and the world that our loving Creator gave us to enjoy.

We pray the following passages will encourage you to see God in all of creation—every seed, every season, every weed, every leaf, and every person—God made everything beautiful in its time.

Read the Key Verse (above) and *Ecclesiastes 3:11-14*.

Keep these passages in mind for the following activities as we search to see God in a new way today.

**“GOD MADE THAT!” GAME**

Look around the room, for two minutes, have each individual make a list of all the things you can see in your surroundings that were created by God.

Share your answers. If more than one person has the same answer, everyone crosses that answer off their list. If the answer is unique, circle it. Score all circled items at the end. Consider a prize at the end of the game for the most unique answers.

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**Group Questions**

- What is your favorite animal?
- In all creation, what fascinates you the most?
- Where else would you live just for the beauty (aesthetics)?
- Which do you love more?
  - Mountains or oceans? Why?
  - Sunrise or Sunset? Why?
  - Warm or Cool weather? Why?

If time permits try:

- Watching Louie Giglio’s YouTube video about Laminin.
- Watching a nature program.



**SEEK GOD – Week 5**  
**“Know God through Prayer”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 4 Review Question:** Which activity did you choose? Tell how it impacted your understanding of God as Creator.

**Objective:** To seek to know God through prayer

**Key Verse:** *“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.” 1 Peter 3:12*

**WATCH THE PRAYER VIDEO**

What is prayer? It is communication with God. It is like picking up the phone to call a parent or a friend to share exciting news, or a really painful day. But with God, you never get a busy signal or voicemail. You don't have to wait for Him to call you back.

Communication with God can just start with simple, short conversations.

**What are some of the reasons people fail to pray?**

Here are some reasons I (Sheri) fail to pray:

- I can get bored when it feels like I'm the only one talking.
- I'm not really sure how to pray sometimes.
- I get distracted easily, and sometimes I actually forget that I am praying.
- I think God has more important things to spend His time on.
- I reason that my prayers won't make a difference.

**WHY DO YOU FAIL TO PRAY?**  
**LEVELS OF PRAYER**

There are levels of prayer based on your relationship with the Father. You can relate it to a friendship. When you first meet a friend, you might just talk with them or see them occasionally or talk on the phone, but as your friendship grows, you increase your time together.

As we grow in knowing God as our Father and as our intimacy with Him increases, our prayer life should follow.

Everyone has a different relationship with God because we are unique individuals. Isn't it cool that God made and loves our individuality?

**Progression of Prayers**

- **Just talk to God.** You don't have to pray a wordy, reverent prayer. You can just say “Hi, God. Thank you for today.”
- **Get real.** Be transparent. If you are mad, tell God about it. After I lost my mom, I would say, “I am so sad, God. My heart is just broken. I miss my mom so much. I am sad that I will never have the relationship with her that I always longed to have.”
- **Kneeling prayers.** Get on your knees in reverence.
- **Arrow prayers.** These are just short prayers that lift up what is on your heart at that moment—while driving, thinking, or talking with others.
- **Eat-Carpet prayers** Get to the lowest possible place to pray to the most high God. I ate a lot of carpet when my mom died.

- **Pray always.** I like open conversation with God. When I wake up, I pray and keep the line open all day. It's like when you call a company and they put you on hold for seven minutes and then again for four more. I don't know about you, but I put the phone on speaker while I am waiting. When you finish and just start again, it is like putting God on the speaker button.
- **Fasting prayers.** Withhold food (or something else) for a period of time and use the time you would have normally spent eating (or doing whatever else) in prayer. Or, use your hunger pangs to remind you to pray for something you are really seeking God about. *Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29 (KJV)*
- **Scripture prayers.** God's Word never returns void. If you don't know what to pray, pray the Word. Our family loves to pray *Ephesians 1:17-20* together.
- **In Jesus' name prayers.** Ask in Jesus' name and then speak to the mountain in Jesus' name (*Mark 11:20-26*).
- **Spirit prayers.** When you don't know what to pray, ask God for the gift of praying in tongues, and pray 'in the Spirit.' *"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit." Jude 1:20*

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## GROUP "SHARE" TIME

- Why do you fail to pray?
- How real/transparent are you with God? Be honest.
- Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (10 being most real). \_\_\_\_\_  
*"He knows every thought before it comes from your lips."*  
*Psalms 139*
- Today, with whom are you most real/transparent?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you want your prayer life to look like in one year?

Get a vision for it! (Remember, where there is no vision, the people perish.)

*Read Ephesians 1:17-22 and 3:16-20*

Paul prayed the following Scriptures for believers. Pray these together and at home. Print and post these where you will see them throughout the week to remind you to pray them. God will change you from the inside out!

## **EPHESIANS 1:17-22**

*"Father God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that You may grant me a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the deep and intimate knowledge of You, By having the eyes of my heart flooded with light, so that I can know and understand the hope to which You have called me, and how rich is Your glorious inheritance in the saints."*

*"And so that I can know and understand what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of Your power in and for me and all those who believe, as demonstrated in the working of Your mighty strength, Which You exerted in Christ when You raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at Your [own] right hand in the heavens, Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age and in this world, but also in the age and the world which are to come."*

*"And You have put all things under Your feet and have appointed Christ the universal and supreme Head of the church Which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all [for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself]."*

I pray this, waiting expectantly on You, Father, my God who watches over His word to perform it! In Jesus Name, Amen.

**EPHESIANS 3:16-20**

*“Father, may You grant me out of the rich treasury of Your glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit. May Christ through my faith [actually] dwell (make His permanent home) in my heart! May I be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, That I may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; That I may really come to know the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge; that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself].”*

*“Now to You, Lord who, by the power that is at work within me, is able to do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think or imagine. To You be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen (so be it.).”*

I pray this, waiting expectantly on You Father, my God who watches over His word to perform it! In Jesus Name, Amen.

**SEEK GOD – Week 6**  
**“Know God through Prayer”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 5 Review Question:** Share how, since last week, your prayer time has changed.

**Objective:** To seek to know God through prayer while resting, listening, and delighting in His presence

**Key Verse:** *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*  
*Psalms 46:10*

**Watch this Week's Video**

It is very difficult for me (Sheri) to be quiet! There are so many distractions that divide my attention: work, children, television, other people, sports, etc. Maybe you are a person who is a great listener, or—like me—maybe you are the one that never stops talking long enough to listen.

When I am busy, distracted, talking or formulating a response, I cannot possibly listen and truly hear others. The same is true when we are trying to hear from the Lord. He is gentle and kind. To hear Him, we need to learn the art of listening. We need to intentionally be still and wait on the Lord.

1. Can you tell the difference between what's going on in your head and God's voice?
2. Have you heard from the Lord before? If so, when do you typically hear from God? I've heard many people say, "the shower." Why? Because we are still and there is nothing else to distract us in there.

I remember a time when I had no idea how to discern my ideas from God's. I would say things like, "Is this God or is this me?" I was such a busy person that I didn't know God's voice because I was never still.

If you haven't ever known how to hear from the Lord, do not be discouraged, this is the right study for you!

**GROUP SHARE! TIME**

Consider sharing methods that you use to slow down. Today in our groups, we will stop the distractions, be still and spend time with the Father.

**INDIVIDUAL SEEK TIME**

Find a private place to be still, dwell on God, His presence, His names (from week 3), a Scripture (some are listed below), pray, or just rest in Him. Decide how you would like to spend your time.

**Scriptures**

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Psalms 23:1-3*

If you are not having periods of rest, maybe you should ask, "God, am I missing it?"

*"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:28-29*

**Are you at rest?** I am not talking about the sleeping kind of rest, but a peacefulness that is unexplainable in your soul? I (Sheri) lost my mom to cancer in 2006. I grieved and missed her so much, but with all the pain, I had peacefulness in my soul that could not be explained in words.

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## **NOW SHARE!**

Gather back together. Share how this quiet time ministered to you.

How is God transforming you in your relationship with Him?

Celebrate and pray for each another.

**SEEK GOD – Week 7**  
**“Know God through Prayer”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 6 Review Question:** Did you write a note to God in your prayer journal this week? If so, would you share it with us?

**Objective:** Seeking to know God through intercessory prayer, petitions, and faith.

**Key Verse:** *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” Ephesians 6:18*

Today, we have the opportunity to pray together! Some of you might be really comfortable with this. For others, this might be your first time and you might have the desire to run for the door, but don't! I (Sheri) remember the first time I had to pray aloud with others. I was scared! I have no idea what words came out of my mouth, but I know it was short.

Don't worry about what you sound like or about what you say or don't say. Remember what God wants most of all is *you*. He wants a relationship with you. You don't have a relationship if you don't talk to or spend time with God.

Jesus' last words in John 17 were that the body of Christ would be one like He and the Father were one. Coming together in prayer is a great way to exercise unity. It will build you up and help you pray on the spot with others in the future.

**GROUP SHARE! TIME**  
**Read this passage together.**

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:10-18*

What stands out to you in these verses? One thing that stands out to me is that we are in a spiritual battle. Can you see the “Spirit world?” I can't. So many times, I try to fight the battles that I can see with my eyes, but there are other things going on within the spiritual realm that I cannot see. Prayer is a weapon in this battle!

Like we shared with you on the video this week, share with one another the journey of your personal prayer life and relationship with God.

Now, break into prayer partnerships and let's pray with one another. Be real and transparent with God. Don't feel intimidated sharing your heart with God in front of someone else. Don't worry about what you sound like or about what you say or don't say. Just allow yourself to be vulnerable with God.

What if you don't know what to pray? The Bible is packed full of prayers. Jeremiah 1:12 says that God's Word is active and alive and He watches over it to perform it, so, you can never go wrong praying Scriptures.

Here are some Scripture prayers that you may want to keep with you to pray when needed:

- For protection – *Psalms 91*
- To know God, your calling, identity and what is yours – *Ephesians 1:17-23*
- To deepen your understanding of God – *Ephesians 3:16-20*
- God knows your thoughts – *Psalms 139:1-4*
- When your mountain (your problems or circumstances) seems too big – *Isaiah 41:15 and Mark 11:23*

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## **NOW SHARE!**

Gather back together. Discuss why you think prayer is important.

**SEEK GOD – Week 8**  
**“Know God through Praise and Worship”**  
**SHARE!**

**Week 7 Review Question:** How did week seven deepen your understanding of prayer? If you did the CRAVE! Section and looked up the word “faith” in all four gospels, what did you find?

**Objective:** Seeking to know God intimately so that our lives overflow with worship in all that we do!

**Key Verse:** *“Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his footstool; He is holy.” Psalm 99:5*

I (Sheri) was at a professional basketball game the other night. As the players ran onto the court, fireworks were going off (inside the building). My kids were mesmerized and entertained! The MC would say, "Scream!" and everyone in the place would get louder and louder. The excitement over this team just making one basket was unbelievable. I saw this one man wearing the wildest hat to support his team and others with their faces painted. Whether the basketball team was doing well or not, the fans were sold out! This was **worship**.

Before national championship games, fans prepare for watch parties. They get all the right clothing gear, the right food and then they explode in cheer and celebration for their team.

I love the following verse from the Bible where it talks about a crowd that gathered to wait for Jesus. They came early—maybe gathering like a parade and when the Jesus (the One and Only) came in, read below what took place:

*“As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles*

*which they had seen, shouting: ‘BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’ But Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!’” Luke 19:37-40 NASB*

This is **worship**.

There are two kinds of worship seen in these examples. One is the worshipping of something that is temporal (basketball) and the other is worshipping the Eternal Living God. **What or who do you worship?**

The past seven weeks have been a season to prepare our hearts to worship God. Our prayer is that your life becomes an overflow of worship to the Father. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,” Colossians 3:23*

### **GROUP SHARE TIME**

During our SHARE time this week, we are going to worship the Living God.

Everyone has their own way to prepare to worship God. Maybe today your life was chaotic and you didn’t have time to settle your heart. Let’s take a moment now to do that—through prayer, stillness, or reading a verse. You choose the way that works for you.

If you need a verse, there are many verses in the Psalm that can help you prepare for worship. Pick your favorite or one of these and take a few minutes to prepare your heart. (*Psalm 134, Psalm 63:1-8, Psalm 150*)



### Think about this:

- If an investigator looked at your calendar and checkbook, what would he say you worship?
  - For me, he might say my children. What's yours? Your job, serving others, your family, money, health, sports, a hobby, friends, depression, negative attitude? Lay it down today. Ask God to give you a heart to worship Him **above** everything else!
- Music is one way to worship, what are some other ways to worship God?
- What are some ways that you can prepare your heart to worship God?