



## Study Guide

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last update = **30Nov2015**

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# Get Ripped!

## Strengthening Your Core for Christ

### Study Guide

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### Series Overview

Together, let's work out our spiritual muscles in key areas of the Christian life. We challenge you to stretch and take your relationship with God further than you've ever gone. Regardless of where you are in your spiritual development, the goal is to move from where you ARE to where GOD wants you to BE. Are you ready to get ripped?

### Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal study and reflection
- as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in knowing more about God.

# 1–Humility: Pride and Submission

## Scripture: 1Peter 5:5-8

- <sup>5</sup> Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,
- that He may exalt you in due time,
- <sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
- <sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

## Icebreaker: Core Strengthening

Talk about your experiences with doing exercises to develop your core muscles. Why is developing your core important? Is developing a visible “six-pack” the important thing or is there something less visible about core strength that is more important?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- There is a difference between God humbling you and you humbling yourself. When you place yourself in a humble position and lean on God, He has reason to lift you up [[1Pet 5:6](#) and [Jas 4:10](#)]. What are some ways you can place yourself in a humble position with God, at home, at work, or with friends? What are the dangers of lifting up yourself?
- What are some ways you can TRAIN in humility? Describe how you might design a humility training program for yourself. What could you change about your morning routine, your daily schedule, and your purposeful interaction with others?

- Awareness of our low estate before God is necessary before He can do much else with us. What is the first beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount (**Mat 5:3**)? Until we've developed that first "attitude of being," a humble spirit, we aren't ready for deeper spiritual development. Measure your humility by your sense of unworthiness to receive God's goodness and grace. List some of the ways that God is good and gracious to you. Describe your attitude toward how good and gracious He has been (**Luke 17:10**).
- There is a difference between confidence and pride. Under what circumstances do you tend toward pride? Think of times when you have experienced humble confidence.

pride =	undue confidence in your abilities, position, or possessions ( <b>Jas 4:6</b> )
humble confidence =	understanding your identity in Christ well enough that you use what He gives you in the ways that He directs you ( <b>2Cor 10:17-18</b> )

- What are some ways to model humility with those under your care?

### **Dig a Little Deeper: Second Fiddle**

Are you humble enough to play second fiddle? Study the life of Barnabas. Notice how he saw potential in Saul (Paul). When others were afraid of Saul, Barnabas risked his life to take Saul to the apostles (**Acts 9:26-27**). At first Barnabas was in charge; however, he sought out Paul (**Acts 11:22-26**). He was content to harmonize with Paul and not concerned that Paul was promoted. There is no harmony without someone willing to play second fiddle.

## Application Exercise: Serving with Humility

One of the most helpful things you can do to grow in humility is to serve others. During the coming week, set out on a determined course to focus on the good of others without drawing attention to

*The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service.*  
--Richard Foster

yourself. Notice any changes in your attitude. If your flesh doesn't complain, you are probably not being humble enough. At the same time,

when you become the boss of your flesh, your spirit should become more content ([Mat 11:29](#)).

## 2-Scripture: Reading and Memorization

### Scripture: 2Timothy 3:16-17

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness,  
<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### Icebreaker: It is Reading You

As you read the Word of God, it reads you. In what ways does having the Bible read you make you comfortable or uncomfortable?

### Questions for Study or Discussion

- What methods have you used to keep your lifestyle in line with God's standards? What is the only effective way to be in alignment with God ([Eph 5:9-11](#))?
- What helps you get back on God's path when you wander? What can the Word of God do for you to help you return to the path ([John 17:17](#))?
- Our world is filled with temptation and distraction. To prosper as His disciple, you need to be in His Word to allow it to overcome those influences ([John 8:31-32](#)). What Bible reading plans have you tried? If you've been using the [OWNit365](#) plan, share what you like about that plan.
- God has a purpose for your life that is unique to you ([Eph 2:10](#)). Have you found your purpose? If not, how are you seeking God's purpose for your life?
- Discuss some methods for memorizing Bible verses. Which ones work best for you?

- What are some ways to use everyday events as openings to talk to people about how the Bible applies to their lives?
- Make a list of Bible verses that you think would be helpful to memorize with others.

## Dig a Little Deeper: Why Bible Study is Important

Study the following verses to further understand why Bible study is important.

- Increases your faith ([Rom 10:17](#) and [1Cor 2:9-16](#))
- Helps you know the Truth ([Acts 17:11-12](#) and [Acts 20:29-32](#))
- Teaches you ([Psa 119:98-100](#))
- Keeps you from sinning ([Psa 119:11](#) and [1John 2:14](#))
- Fills your heart with joy ([Jer 15:16](#))
- Gives you power in prayer ([John 15:7](#))

## Some Helpful Verses to Memorize When:

tempted, <a href="#">1Cor 10:13</a>	afraid, <a href="#">2Tim 1:7</a>
anxious, <a href="#">Php 4:6-8</a> and <a href="#">1Pet 5:7</a>	suffering, <a href="#">Psa 55:22</a> and <a href="#">Rom 8:18</a>
struggling financially, <a href="#">Php 4:19</a>	confused about what God is doing, <a href="#">Rom 8:28</a>
grieving, <a href="#">Psa 34:18</a>	doubting God, <a href="#">Pro 3:5</a>
doubting yourself, <a href="#">Php 4:13</a>	lonely, <a href="#">John 16:32</a>

## Application Exercise: Share a Verse

During the coming week, pick a verse to memorize. Seek opportunities to share your verse with others throughout the week.



# 3-Prayer: Thanksgiving

**Scripture: 1Thessalonians 5:16-19**

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always,

<sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing,

<sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for

*this is the will of God in Christ  
Jesus for you.*

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit.

## Icebreaker: Better than Walking on Water

Those closest to Jesus asked Him to teach them to pray. They could have asked Him to teach them to walk on water. Why was it more important for them to learn how to pray than to walk on water? In what ways is praying important to us today?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- In your experience, when is a good time to pray? List some circumstances that usually prompt you to pray. What are some times when you don't pray that would be good times to pray?
- When are you most likely to praise God?
  - ▶ Why is it helpful to praise God in our good times (**Psa 34:1**)?
  - ▶ Why is it helpful to praise God in our suffering (**2Cor 12:8-10**)?
  - ▶ Why is it helpful to praise God in our battles (**2Chr 20:21**)?

*If you pray to seek God's face, you'll know His hand,  
but if you're looking for His hand, you may miss His face.  
--Daniel Henderson*

- Praying is hard work. As with any hard work, there are challenges. For each challenge below, list ways to overcome it.
  - ▶ Not asking (**Jas 4:2**)
  - ▶ Not being specific (**Luke 18:38**, 41)
  - ▶ Giving up (**Luke 18:1**)
  - ▶ Doubting God (**Jas 1:6-7** and **Heb 11:6**)
  - ▶ Asking with ungodly motives (**Jas 4:3** and **Mat 6:5-6**)
  - ▶ Mindless repetition (**Mat 6:7**)
  - ▶ Not serving God (**Pro 21:13**)
  - ▶ Sin you have not confessed to God (**Isa 1:15-16** and **Psa 66:18**)
  - ▶ Harboring an unforgiving spirit (**Mat 6:14-15** and **Mark 11:25**)
  
- Have you participated in a 40-Day Prayer Challenge? If so, what benefits did you notice from participating? What suggestions do you have for others on how to make it easier to meet a 40-Day Prayer Challenge?
  
- What opportunities do you have to show others the importance of prayer in your own life? When you have an important decision to make, do they see you pray first?
  
- What are your regular prayers for those under your care? What can you ask others to pray for you?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Different Ways to Pray

Read the passages below to explore different ways to pray.

- Pray a short prayer list to God every day (**Psa 88:9**).
- Pray by pouring out your heart to God in a letter (**Job 19:23** and **Psa 13**).
- Pray immediately for people when God brings them to your mind (**Php 1:3-5**).
- Pray a small prayer (**Neh 2:4-6**).

- Pray by sitting silently and listening to God (**Psa 46:10** and **Psa 131:2**).
- Pray Scriptures back to God (**Psa 119:76**). Some call this *Lectio divina* (Latin for “sacred reading”). The intent is to savor each word in the passage. Tell God that you want to apply what His Word says to your life. Admit where you struggle and need His help. Where you see a promise, tell Him that you claim that promise for your life.
- Pray by singing a song to God (**Psa 149:1-4**).
- Pray just to tell God how wonderful He is (**Psa 100:4-5** and **2Cor 9:15**).

### **Application Exercise: Practice Praying**

Select one form of prayer from the list in “Dig a Little Deeper” to try this week. Use that form of prayer each day for a full week. Each morning, ask yourself, “What could I accomplish today if I allowed God to work through me?” Then pray about it.

# 4--Fasting: Media, Facebook, and Food

Scripture: Isaiah 58

## Icebreaker: Why Fast?

- Discuss your experience with fasting.
  - ▶ What reasons did you have to fast?
  - ▶ What type of fast did you do?
  - ▶ If you have never fasted, why not?
  
- What should be our primary motive for fasting ([Jas 4:8](#))?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- Fasting makes your heart more attentive to God ([Isa 58:8-12](#)). Fasting brings you into **agreement** with God by removing the static in your life so you can better connect with God. The apostle Paul stated that while many things may be okay to do, he was determined not to let them control his life ([1Cor 6:12](#)). Make a list of things that are often static in our lives.
  
- With the wrong motive, we may attempt to manipulate God with our fasting ([Isa 58:1-9](#)). The second purpose of fasting is **alignment** to God. During fasting, we can experience the truth that God's Word sustains us in a way that food cannot ([Mat 4:4](#)).
  - ▶ How can you tell whether you are in alignment to God or have gone off course ([Ezra 8:21](#) and [John 4:32-34](#))?
  - ▶ If you focus on reading God's Word during your fast, how can fasting become feasting?

- The third purpose of fasting is setting up your **assignment** for God. When you are determined to do great things for God, you need to be clear on your vision and purpose (**Luke 2:37-38**). Praying during your fast is a great way to focus on God's direction for you and allow the Holy Spirit to take charge (**Acts 13:2-3**).
  - ▶ Discuss what you have discovered so far about God's assignment for you.
  - ▶ How might you use fasting and prayer in combination to get greater clarity on your assignment?
  
- Make a list of things that you could give up to spend more time with God. (Ex. Give up one hour of playing video games to read the Bible together as a family.)

### Dig a Little Deeper: Why Fasting?

For each verse, find why the person was fasting and what the person's attitude toward fasting appeared to be.

<i>verse</i>	<i>why he/she fasted</i>	<i>his/her attitude</i>
<b>Daniel 9:3</b>		
<b>2Chronicles 20:3</b>		
<b>Nehemiah 1:4</b>		
<b>Luke 2:36-37</b>		

## Tips for Fasting

- Begin with a partial fast of 24 hours. For instance, if you are doing a food fast, your partial fast might be raw vegetables and water. If you are doing a media fast, you might eliminate one source of media. Pick something to accompany your fast such as prayer or Bible reading. Do the partial fast once a week for two to three weeks.
- After you have tried a partial fast, try a full fast of 24 hours. For a food fast, this might be no food, only water. For a media fast, this would be all forms of media (internet, television, social media, video games). Devote the time you would have spent in eating or using media to praying and Bible reading.

### CAUTION

*If you have a medical condition, check with your doctor before doing any type of food fast.*

## Application Exercise: Partial Fast

During the next week, try a partial fast of 24 hours.

# 5-Giving: Serving

## Scripture: Hebrews 13:13–16

<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

<sup>14</sup> For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore by Him let us

*continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

<sup>16</sup> *But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

## Icebreaker: Spiritually Bloating

What can cause a Christian to become spiritually bloated and constipated. What we can do to avoid or alleviate spiritual constipation?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- TIME: In what ways can you manage your schedule to make God a priority in the following areas? List ideas for each [[Eph 5:16](#) and [Col 4:5](#)].

Worship
Prayer
Bible reading
Serving

- **TALENTS:** God will spark a desire to serve Him when you understand your debt to Him (**1Cor 6:19-20**). What do you owe to Christ?
- **TALENTS:** God will spark a desire to serve Him when you let Him use you (**1Pet 4:10** and **Eph 2:10**). Make a list of abilities that you and others have. Notice the diversity of abilities that He gives. List some of the ways you are serving God with your abilities.
- **TREASURES:** How can what we do here on earth affect our treasures in heaven (**Mat 6:19-21** and **Rom 14:12**)?
- **TREASURES:** What are some reasons for being generous with others (**Heb 13:16** and **Luke 6:38**)? What are some ways to be generous with others?
- List serving opportunities that are available in our church and community.
- Without sounding preachy, what are some ways to show that the reason behind giving and serving always comes back to Jesus?



## Dig a Little Deeper: Get Past the Excuses

Meditate on the following excuses people often give for not serving and the reason for getting past those excuses.

<i>Excuse</i>	<i>Reason for Getting Past It</i>
I don't feel adequate or worthy.	It's not about you or your past. It's about your willingness to serve now [ <a href="#">1Tim 1:12-13</a> ].
I don't know enough.	If you have accepted Christ as Lord, the Holy Spirit will teach you [ <a href="#">John 14:26</a> ].
I have no influence.	All God asks is that you use the abilities He gives you to serve Him. He will take care of the rest [ <a href="#">1Cor 3:5-7</a> ].

### Application Exercise: Managing Your Time, Talents, and Treasures

During the next week, talk to God about any adjustments He wants you to make to the way you use the time, talents, and treasures He has given you to manage.

# 6-Silence: Meditation and Solitude

## Scripture: Psalm 46:10

*Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the  
nations, I will be exalted in the  
earth!*

## Icebreaker: Uncomfortable Silence

Try a small experiment in silence. Spend a full minute focusing on the following verse portion without saying anything or making eye

*Psa 4:4 ... Meditate within your heart..., and be still. Selah (NKJV)*

contact with anyone. Keep as still as you can until the minute is complete. What did you do to try to stay focused and still? How well do you think you did at being still?

## Questions for Study or Discussion

- The inner work of God's Spirit creates a longing for God (**Psa 42:1-2**). The noise in our lives weakens that longing and separates us from God. Make a list of things that are noise in our lives.
- When was the last time you were completely still (**Psa 46:10**)? Describe the experience.
- Solitude is a choice. Solitude happens when you arrange things so you are alone, but not lonely. What you choose to think about and do during solitude will determine the benefit you get from it. Make a list of things to think about during solitude that would help you listen to God. Be specific. For instance, instead of listing "God," list something specific about God.
- List sources of noise in our life. What are some ways to get a break from those sources of noise?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Meditation

Use the following Scripture passages for meditation.

<a href="#">Psalm 1</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 15</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 27</a>
<a href="#">Psalm 32</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 46</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 63</a>
<a href="#">Psalm 100</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 121</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 150</a>

After meditating on each one, write a few words about what you heard from God.

### Tips for Solitude

1. Get away from people who will distract you. This could be a room where you shut the door and everyone agrees not to disturb you. It could be a coffee shop where you won't see anyone you know. It could be a walk, run, or bicycle ride.
2. Get away from all forms of entertainment. Sounds of television and most music will grab your attention. You might use noise-canceling head phones.
3. Set aside all projects and responsibilities. It may help to list them all. Then tell God you are releasing them to Him while you spend some time focusing only on Him.
4. Think about God. Try to imagine some aspect of God that is beyond your ability to express. Tell Him what He means to you (silently or aloud). Ask Him to help you listen to Him with your heart, mind, and soul.

### Application Exercise: What is He Teaching You?

- Consider the last six to twelve months of your life. Make a simple chart of your ups and downs during that period.
- Review each up and down while imagining the Lord walking beside you during each one. How do you imagine He is encouraging you? What do you imagine He is trying to teach you?
- Write any insights that occur to you from this exercise.



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