

The background of the entire page is a solid, medium-green color. On the left side, there is a large, abstract graphic composed of numerous thin, dark-green lines. These lines are arranged in a series of parallel, wavy bands that flow from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are closely spaced, and their collective effect is a textured, organic shape that resembles a stylized letter 'S' or a flowing ribbon.

FUNDAMENTALS

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE



[Click Here for Fundamentals Weekly Video Resources](#)

Chapter 1: **Why The Bible?**

Chapter Overview: We begin our Fundamentals journey discussing The Bible. The Bible is the living Word of God and in this chapter we look at the history of how The Bible was formed, we break down its historical significance, we learn that the Word of God is living, and we answer how to read your Bible through the SOAP method. The goal of this chapter is to give you the tools and knowledge that will help you understand the Bible and God in deeper ways. The Bible brings hope, guidance, security, comfort and confidence to all who read it.

The Big Idea: The Bible is meant to be a part of our life. We must read it, meditate on it, study it, discuss it with others, and apply it to our lives.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open group with some attendees sharing what they hope to gain from the semester and the content. Help attendees feel encouraged to set some expectations and goals for the group, the content and how both will impact their relationship with God.
- Explain what the group will look like: a series of short videos we will watch and discuss, with discussion questions. Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *“Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him.”*
- Today’s topic is the Bible. Want to begin today asking a question: *What role did the Bible play in your childhood and upbringing?*

Video 1 (8 minutes, 50 seconds): The Bible

- Have you ever been guilty of doing things in your life simply because your family has always done them or believed things simply because your family has always believed them? What are some of those things?
- The most common reasons for denying the truthfulness of the Bible include: *it's a bunch of fairy tale like stories, written by men so it's imperfect, too old and not scientific enough, it is full of contradictions, and truth is relative*. Have you ever found yourself wrestling with any of these thoughts? How do we best keep our minds from believing some of these mischaracterizations about the Bible?
- Has there been a time in your life where you felt The Bible come to life? Explain that time.

Video 2 (4 minutes, 17 seconds): Why The Bible Matters

- Has there been a time you felt a certain way about a situation, read your Bible, and found yourself thinking differently about the situation? Share that moment.
- In life, truth matters and the Bible is the only source of consistent and unchanging truth. Truth isn't always easy to accept. What are some truths of the Bible you struggle or have struggled with believing.

Video 3 (17 min 06 seconds): Why The Bible Can Be Trusted

- When you hear the Bible referenced as "*The Word of God*" how does that make you feel? What is the significance of that phrase?
- What characteristic of the Bible stands out the most to you? Why does this characteristic stand out?

- Talk about this idea of wrestling with God. Have there been moments in your life where you've wrestled with God and his desires for your life?
 - What does God wanting us to wrestle with Him reveal about His nature and His truth?

Action Step: Encourage your Fundamentals group to read their Bible every day for the next week and to find a verse they can apply.

Close group in prayer focusing on Joshua 1:8. Pray that God's word would be something that is part of who we are, that we would meditate on it and follow it.

Chapter 2: **Who Is God?**

Chapter Overview: Week 2's content is all about God. God has existed from the beginning, technically He existed before the beginning, which is hard to wrap our heads around...Since God is such a complex being, He is often understood in wrong ways. The content of this chapter looks to right some of those wrong understandings. We will look at the nature of God, the characteristics of God, the various names of God, and The Holy Trinity. All these things help us understand God the right way.

The Big Idea: Our understanding of God is what shapes our view of Him, and how we view God determines how we worship God, how we live; it determines everything

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts).
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*
- Today's topic is God. Want to begin today asking a question: *What is your understanding of who God is right now?*
 - *How would you explain God to someone asking you who He is?*

Video 1 (14 minutes, 18 seconds): Characteristics of God

- AW Tozer said, *"what comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us"*. What comes into your mind when you think about God?

- God knows all about us, like everything about us and still **chooses** to love us. How does that truth impact you and your view of God?
- What characteristic of God stands out to you? How does knowing these characteristics impact your faith in God and view of God?

Video 2 (13 minutes, 12 seconds): The Holy Trinity

- What is the hardest part of the Trinity for you to understand and wrap your head around?
- The complexity of The Trinity is often a sticking point for people and their faith. We can easily avoid things we don't understand. The complexity of The Trinity reveals that our God is layered, deep, and complete. Talk about some of the positives of our God being 3-in-1.
- What was the most helpful part of the teaching on The Trinity?

Action Step: Journal evidence from your life of the three members of the Trinity at work in your life.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to understand Him more so we can worship Him on a deeper level, follow Him with more obedience, and love Him with more passion.

Chapter 3: **Who Is Man?**

Chapter Overview: Chapter 3 is all about how we relate to God. All of us were created to be eternal beings, we all will experience eternity somewhere. This chapter explores this eternal design and how we connect with God in both the natural/physical existence and the eternal existence. This chapter also highlights other world religions to show why Christianity is the only way to connect with God.

The Big Idea: Separation from God keeps us from knowing our purpose and from knowing God's will for our lives.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts).
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*
- Today's topic is us, humankind and how we relate to God. Want to begin today by asking a question: *What evidence, outside of the Bible, do you point to that reveals God's existence?*

Video 1 (17 minutes 30 seconds): Eternal Beings

- The video references that we are broken and cannot save ourselves. If we don't acknowledge that we are broken we will never recognize our need for Jesus. When was the moment you recognized you needed Jesus?
 - How has Jesus met you in your painful moments?

- Psalm 139 declares that we are created in God's image and His greatest creation. What makes it difficult for you to accept that you were made in God's image? Identify and discuss those things.
- We are eternal beings, meaning we exist for more than the physical life we are living. What makes it difficult to remember that? What sort of physical things keep us from focusing on our eternal destination?
- Heaven and hell are real places. Sin is a real problem. Sin was the result of humankind's choices and hell was a consequence of those sinful choices. How does that truth impact the way you view God and our free will?

Video 2 (13 minutes 7 seconds): Salvation

- Lord means surrendering control. What evidence would a life surrendered to God produce? How would we be able to determine that Jesus is Lord of someone's life?
- Sanctification is an important term in our faith journey. It means we are constantly growing, we are consistently becoming more holy. That term means we are going to make mistakes but we must repent, learn, and grow from them. Talk about how you balance not being perfect with striving for a holy standard. How do we best practice both accepting and extending grace to ourselves and to people when they fall short?
- If we are saved through faith and not works, what is the point of us doing good works?
- If we are saved by grace, why can't we just live like we have a free pass through life?

Action Step: Attend Action Step 2. Talk to someone about your gifts and purpose.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to connect with Him in real and authentic relationship. Pray this real relationship would allow us to connect to the purpose and plans He has for our lives.

Chapter 4: **Who Is the Holy Spirit and What Does He Do?**

Chapter Overview: Week 4 focuses on the Holy Spirit. One of the most misunderstood parts of Christianity is the role and work of the Holy Spirit. In this chapter we unpack who the Holy Spirit is, what the Holy Spirit does, and how the Holy Spirit empowers us for ministry.

The Big Idea: My choices affect God's work in my life. Ignoring His direction makes His voice more distant and difficult to hear.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts).
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*
- Today's topic is The Holy Spirit. Want to begin today asking a few questions:
What is your understanding of the Holy Spirit and what He does?
 - *Why do you think there is so much confusion about the Holy Spirit?*

Video 1 (7 minutes 30 seconds): Who Is The Holy Spirit?

- The word convict means to convince. We often associate the word convict with a prison sentence rather than a convincing. Convincing means there isn't force involved, there's choice. God's work on our life is gentle and we always have a choice to follow or not. Has there been a moment in your life where the Holy Spirit has convinced you of something? Explain that moment.

Video 2 (14 minutes 40 seconds): Spiritual Gifts

- Spiritual gifts are supernatural gifts that God empowers us with. Do you know your Spiritual Gift? How do you feel when you realize God gives us access to His power, attributes, and gifts?
- Talk a little about that idea of my outlook on life is more important than my desired outcomes. If God truly controls the outcomes of all our situations that will cause us to live in a tension: we know God CAN do it, we just don't know WHEN he will do it. How do we best live still trusting God with control in that tension?

Video 3 (13 minutes 45 seconds): Manifestation Gifts [Speaking In Tongues]

- Why do you think speaking in tongues makes us so uncomfortable? Why is there so much confusion around it and misuse of it?
- When it comes to spiritual gifts, we tend to have a bad habit of making the gifts greater than the giver of the gifts. How do we best remain humble and in a place of acknowledging that God is greater than the gift?

Action Step: Listen and follow. Set aside time this week to ask God to reveal an action step you need to take. Ask Him questions like: Is there someone I know who needs a phone call? Is there someone in need I can do something for? Is there someone I need to have a conversation with? After asking the question, wait and listen for the Holy Spirit to answer. Once you hear the answer, follow His instructions.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to connect with Him in a real and authentic relationship. Pray this real relationship would allow us to connect to the purpose and plans He has for our lives.

Chapter 5: **What Is Prayer?**

Chapter Overview: Chapter 5 is all about prayer. God desires a personal relationship with us, and prayer is the main way we communicate with him. Like any relationship, it takes time for us to learn how to communicate effectively, comfortably, and authentically. Prayer is a spiritual life line that keeps us connected to God; it gives us access to His direction, His wisdom, and His guidance. In this chapter we will cover how to pray, types of prayer and dive into Spiritual warfare.

Big Idea: Life is more spiritual than we think, which makes prayer an essential part of our lives.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts)
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*
- Today's topic is prayer. Want to begin today asking a question: *What are some things you often have difficulty with when it comes to prayer?*

Video 1 (7 minutes 10 seconds): What Is Prayer?

- How does defining prayer as how we communicate with God impact your views on it?
- Share about a time you have experienced one of your prayers being effective. Now that you understand what prayer is, how does it change your view of what it can accomplish?

Video 2 (13 minutes 49 seconds): Spiritual Warfare

- Have there been moments in your own life where Satan has attempted to lie to you about God's truth or attempted to get you to question God's plan for your life? Explain that moment.
- Prior to this teaching, what were your thoughts on the topic of spiritual warfare (angels and demons)? What are your thoughts on the topic now?

Video 3 (9 minutes 36 seconds): The Armor of God

- What stood out to you the most with the teaching about the different pieces of the armor of God?
 - How does the understanding of The Armor of God change the way you think and feel about spiritual warfare?

Action Step: Pray the Armor of God prayer for a week and journal the impact the prayer is having.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to exercise authority and power in our lives against spiritual strongholds and forces. Pray this authority would allow us to walk with more confidence and faith towards the purpose and plans He has for our lives.

Chapter 6: **What is the Church?**

Chapter Overview: Chapter 7 is all about the Church. Jesus loves the Church so much that he died for it. The church is a gathering of believers. This gathering is meant to build our faith. When we are around other believers, worshiping God and sharing testimonies, it results in a transfer and stirring of faith. This community is to seek the Lord by being unified, encouraging one another, worshiping together, giving generously, meeting needs, and following the Word of God.

Big Idea: We were never designed to experience life in relationship with God alone, we must also be part of a healthy community of believers. We will never fully experience all God has for our life disconnected from a healthy church.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts)
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*
- Today's topic is The Church. Want to begin today asking a question: *What role did church play in your childhood?*

How would you describe the role the church plays in your life today?

Video 1 (16 minutes 58 seconds): The Church Defined

- The true definition of “the church” is a “*gathering of believers*”, not an institution. How does that understanding change the way you have traditionally viewed the church?
- The Bible defines the characteristics of a healthy church as being: ***Unity, Worship, Healthy Community, Evangelism, Likable*** - all these point to a community of people, not traits of an institution. Which of these characteristics stands out the most to you? Which of these characteristics is the hardest to maintain?
- Church hurt is a common phrase used by people to explain previous experiences where people in the church have fallen short, let them down, or abused their authority. We just learned that the Church is a body of believers, a body of imperfect people. Moments of pain and let down are inevitable. How do we best work through these moments of difficulty and disappointment? How can we still believe in The Church when church people are the ones who let us down?

Video 2 (11 minutes 20 seconds): Lifestyle of Generosity

- Let’s begin by answering those questions Pastor Justin just asked: What are you doing to build up and advance the church?
 - In what ways are you using your gifts to build up others?
- We are called to live a life of giving of ourselves. What are the things that have, or currently are, holding you back from going all in with a lifestyle of generosity (time, talents, and treasure)?

Action Step: Begin tithing to the church if you have not committed to already do so. If you are currently tithing to the church, look for ways to give generously this week to those around you. Buy someone a coffee, pay for someone's meal, financially assist someone in need at your workplace, to serve someone in need (maybe a neighbor). Journal about how God uses those acts of generosity to open doors.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to fully engage in the life of The Church. Pray that God would give us an ability to overcome past hurt and church failings so that we can pursue the purpose that He has for our life.

Chapter 7: **Why Can I Trust God?**

Chapter Overview: Chapter 7 is all about our ability to trust God for our life's best results. Trusting God is one of the most important things we can learn to do, it also is one of the hardest things for us to learn to do. In this chapter we will define the doctrine of provision, identify the various ways God provides for us, and how those things allow us to live with deeper dependency on God. God is in control and will continually provide for the life He's created and learning to trust an unseen God to provide for our real and seen needs is one of the greatest exercises of our faith.

Big Idea: God is powerful and purposeful. He is purposefully providing for, sustaining and governing all of creation.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts)
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*
- Today's topic is all about the doctrine of provision - which is God's ability to provide for us. Want to begin today asking a question: *What are some things you often have difficulty with when it comes to trusting God?*

Video 1 (12 minutes 21 seconds): Providence Defined

- Providence says that God is not just in control, but He also has purpose in His control. Has there ever been a time in your life you've seen this to be true. A time when God used difficult circumstances to deepen your faith and trust in Him? Explain that moment.
- Define the term "trust." How does your life reflect those you trust?
 - What are the ways your life reflects how you trust God?
 - How do you continue trusting God when it seems like He is letting you down?

Video 2 (6 minutes 3 seconds): Foundational Principles of Provision

- This video teaching laid out 3 important truths for us to both know and practice in order to really live a life of surrender to God's provision. Let's take a couple of minutes to discuss these truths a little more. Truth 1: *God creates I depend*. In other words, God is the source - or boss - of all life. What are the things that cause us to live thinking we are the god of our life?
- Truth 2: *God controls I experience*. This truth is all about our ability to surrender our desire. Why is learning how to surrender desire such a difficult thing?
- Truth 3: *God judges I accept His rulings*. This truth is all about accepting God's ways as being best. His answers may not always match my expectations, when those moments happen how do we best navigate them?

Video 3 (11 minutes 16 seconds): Provision Illustrated

- How would you answer the question: Do I trust God more than I trust myself?

Action Step: Begin praying for God to reveal any areas in your life you need to trust Him more in. When He answers those prayers, listen and obey.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to trust Him more. Pray the knowledge gained from this chapter would allow us to experience a deeper intimacy with God. Pray Ephesians 3:20 - *now all glory to God who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

Chapter 8: **How Does It All End?**

Chapter Overview: This week's content is all about the End Times. When it comes to this topic most of us respond in 1 of 2 ways: we either avoid it out of fear (out of sight out of mind approach) or we obsess over it because we want to be in control. The reality is we all need to live in the middle of these 2 mindsets. We cannot be ignorant towards this topic, but we also cannot obsess over it. The content of this chapter will help us maintain a mindset that will keep us in the middle.

Big Idea: We need to study End Times to be informed but we must be careful to not obsess. My circumstances do not dictate God's timeline, His timeline comforts my circumstances.

- Use this week to have some fun by having a movie night theme. The teaching of this is longer than previous weeks and the content is heavier than previous weeks. Help attendees feel more comfortable by making some popcorn, having some movie theater candy, and soda to help attendees stay engaged and have some fun.

Getting Your Group Started:

- Open asking for testimonies/take-aways from the previous week's reading (reference reflection portions in chapter to help guide thoughts)
- Remind attendees of the goal of the group: *"Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him."*

- Today's topic is the End Times. Today isn't about debating the timeline details of the End Times, today is about how we can navigate the End Times with faith, hope, and trust in God. Want to begin today asking a question: *Why do you think there is such a fascination with how the world will end? Do you find yourself getting caught up in the fascination? Why do you think so much fear tends to come with this topic?*

Video 1 (42 minutes 26 seconds): What are the End Times and Second Coming?

- The Apostle Paul talks a lot about heaven being a much better place than earth. If that is the case, do you find yourself looking forward to Christ's return or do you find yourself wanting to experience a few things before He returns? What are the things you catch yourself thinking you'd like to experience before He returns?
- How do Christians best balance living in a world that is heading towards its end with not being overwhelmed by fear?

Action Step: Invite someone—a family member, neighbor, classmate, barista, coworker, server—to attend a church service with you this week.

Close group in prayer focusing on God giving us an ability to not allow the fears of the unknown to dictate our lives. Pray that the knowledge of the End Times would all us to live with greater faith and more urgency to reach people with the gospel.

Best Practices:

1. Start every group with vision.

Vision statement to begin group with:

“Knowledge and experience move us closer to God. My prayer is that God brings knowledge and understanding to you through this content and group that helps move you closer to him.”

Vision reminds attendees they are on a personal journey and that you play a small part. God’s word, spirit, and our personal pursuit will be what ultimately leads to spiritual growth.

We’d also recommend beginning every group with personal testimonies. Ask the group every week, *“What is the most impactful take-away from last week’s content?”*

2. You aren’t teaching doctrine, you’re facilitating discussion.

Videos are teaching

A lot of time, prayer, and intentionality is behind the content we are sharing with the attendees. We believe what will be shared is enough for people to begin their own journey of understanding God’s truth. Please refrain from adding your personal thoughts or opinions to what is discussed and taught.

3. You aren't expected to entertain all opinions.

Redirect conversation that detracts from main discussion points.

The best learning and understanding comes from discussing truth and hearing from others. If someone tries to bring up content that is controversial or not connected to the discussion politely redirect to keep group on the rails. Not expected to entertain every opinion, but we should address every opinion.

"Hey _____, that's a great question and I'd love to talk with you more offline after group"

4. You aren't leading alone.

Use pastoral staff for additional support.

You may find yourself in conversations that may feel "above your paygrade". It is completely appropriate to tell an attendee that you don't know an answer to a question they're asking. Your location pastor is your biggest asset. Use them when necessary (this also speaks to why location pastors are heavily involved in determining who will lead these groups).

"I don't know the answer to that, but I'd love to spend some time this week helping you connect with one of our pastors to help find that answer".

5. You aren't expected to be an expert.

Leading new things always feels challenging. Getting married, becoming a parent, starting a new position all are examples. God is faithful and will be with you in this step the way He has been with you every step to this point. People are not looking for a theology expert, they are looking for someone who is hospitable, caring, and bold enough to start a conversation.