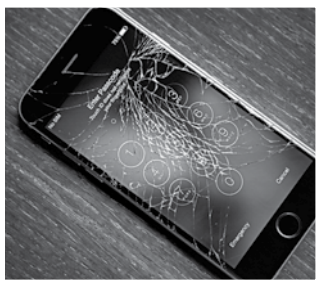


Get into the Study



5 MINUTES

DISCUSS: Question #1 on page 68 of the PSG: “When have you had a warranty that really paid off?”



GUIDE: Direct group members to “The Bible Meets Life” on page 69 of the PSG. Introduce the importance of trusting in Christ by reading or summarizing the text or by encouraging group members to read it on their own.

RECAP: The Christian life—grounded solely in the Word of God—points us to the death and resurrection of Christ as the only path to salvation and a relationship with God. We can add nothing to it. When we simply trust what Christ has done, we can be assured of a relationship with God.

GUIDE: Call attention to “The Point” on page 69 of the PSG: “We can be sure God saves us when we trust in Christ.”

SESSION 6

Sure of Salvation

THE POINT

We can be sure God saves us when we trust in Christ.

LIFE CONNECTION

Trusting others doesn't come easy for many of us. We've been burned, hurt, and let down by others we've trusted. In light of such experiences, we might question whether or not we can trust God. God says He will save me, but can I really trust that I am saved? God is like no other. He has proven Himself faithful and trustworthy, and we can rest in the assurance that when we trust Him, He saves us.

THE PASSAGES

1 John 5:1-5,11-13,18-21

THE SETTING

First John is first and foremost a letter of assurance. We have focused our study on five things we can be sure of: forgiveness, a relationship, the truth, victory, and God's love. Today's study focuses on being sure of salvation. We can be sure God saves us when we trust in Christ. In chapter 5, John focused on three things we can know:

1. We are born of God because we trust Jesus is the Christ (vv. 1-5);
2. We have eternal life because God's Word says so (vv. 11-13); and
3. We are saved because our lives have changed (vv. 18-21).

1 JOHN 5:1-5

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Verse 1. Several times in 1 John the writer discussed three tests of being a Christian. Faith (belief), love, and obedience are evidences of the natural growth that follow a birth from above. Faith is the sign of a new life, and the presence of this life involves love for all who share it (v. 1). The reality of this love for God is shown by obedience (vv. 2-3). Such obedience is made possible by the gift of God, a truth that is affirmed in the life of Christ (v. 4) and in the experience of believers (v. 5). These verses help assure us we can know we are born of God because Jesus is the Christ.

John began with the truth of the inclusive nature of God's love: it changes **whosoever believeth**. John expressed the content of this belief in this way: **Jesus is the Christ**. The new birth demonstrates believers have committed themselves to God through Jesus Christ. John referred to the new birth to show how true faith enables a person to experience a child-to-father relationship with God. **Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him**. For Christians, love is the key; this includes the origin of love (God's love for all people), the demonstration of love (Jesus' voluntary sacrifice on the cross to do for us what we could never do), and the result of love (Christians' actions toward others, especially other Christians).

What if you have not been **born of God**? Although 1 John was not written specifically for the purpose of evangelism (unlike John's Gospel—see John 20:30-31), nevertheless 1 John does address sinners' new birth. John

PRAY: Transition into the study by asking God to help the group understand how we can be sure of our salvation when we trust in Christ. Thank Him for the gift of salvation.

Study the Bible

1 John 5:1-5



10 MINUTES

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 1 John 5:1-5 on page 70 of the PSG.

RECAP: John presented a triad of assurances: the assurance of our faith, the assurance of our love, and the assurance of our obedience. The first of these—faith—is based on what we believe. If the object of our faith is wrong, then everything else will be wrong. It is impossible to be filled with the Spirit of God and His love if the object of our faith is an erroneous view of Christ. Everything rises or falls on our view of Christ.

DISCUSS: Question #2 on page 72 of the PSG: **“How can you tell someone is born of God?”**

Alternate: What is the role of faith in our lives?

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In

advance, obtain an acorn, a pecan, and a peanut (all in their shells). Since it is fall, they should be available in abundance. Display the three items and ask members to say what each item would produce if planted correctly. Point out that the nature of the seed determines the nature of the plant. Ask members to share how this truth from nature illustrates how God's seed of the gospel produces His life in believers to make us like Christ.

described how we can become Christians: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The inside front cover of this Bible study guide gives further information about how to help someone become a Christian.

Verse 2. To love God without loving His children is impossible. Genuine love for God is revealed by obedience. If we truly love God, we will both love His children and keep His commands. Love for others is expressed by action; love for God is expressed by obedience. In the Old Testament, love for God was expressed primarily by obedience to His laws (especially the Ten Commandments). While the New Testament continues to connect love and obedience, love for God is expanded to include love for His Son. Love for the Father and Son is expressed in love for God's children. If we love God, we love other Christians.

Verse 3. Here John defined love for God as keeping His commands. Further, God's commands are not a heavy, exhausting burden; they do not crush the freedom love brings. Jesus stated: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). God's commands are the will of an all-wise, all-knowing, and all-loving Father who seeks our highest welfare. If we are tempted to think the love and obedience demanded of Christians are beyond our powers, this verse comes as a welcome source of strength and encouragement. Jobes writes: "When we are set free by Christ to love God, we are set free to live rightly with one another as God has defined 'rightly.' That freedom is light compared to the weight and heaviness of sin."¹

Verse 4. John's answer to how Christians can keep God's commandments is that believers have been given the power by God to overcome the forces of temptation that would prevent obedience. This power is faith; holding the true faith in our hearts opens us to the power of God's new world operating in us and enabling us to overcome the old world. The new birth is a supernatural event, taking us out of the sphere of the world, where Satan rules, into the family of God, where He rules. We have been transferred from the dominion of darkness (the world) to the joy of Jesus (the kingdom of God's Son). Jesus overcame the

devil by destroying his works (1 John 3:8). Therefore, those born of God overcome the world by their faith in Jesus.

Verse 5. John used the term **the world** to refer to the limited, temporary powers opposing God and making obedience difficult. Whatever form the world's assault upon believers takes, the victory has already been won. Knowing Jesus as the Christ who came to bring salvation and life (deliverance from separation from God) enables us to triumph over the world. On the basis of personal experience with and commitment to Jesus, the believer can claim the victory Jesus has already won for His followers.

To believe Jesus has been victorious is to have the power that enables us also to win the battle, for we know our enemy is already defeated and therefore powerless in the long term. To the natural person (one without God) evil appears uncontrollable; to the weak, temptation appears irresistible. A firm belief in Jesus enables us to overcome evil. Such faith is not a means of escape from conflict; on the contrary, it is in the middle of evil's power display that believers are able to call its bluff and proclaim the superior might of Jesus. I can know I am born of God because Jesus is the Christ.

1 JOHN 5:11-13

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

KEY WORD: Record (v. 11)—The word means “witness,” “evidence,” and “testimony.” This word translates the Greek word from which we get our English word *martyr*.

1 ▶ **Verses 11-12.** I can know I have eternal life because God's Word says so. Verses 6-10 use some form of the Greek *martyreo* (verb) or *martyria* (noun, from which we get our English word *martyr*) multiple times. The word means “testimony,” “witness,” “evidence,” or “record.”

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the main points from page 71 of the PSG. The evidence that Jesus is the Christ is overwhelming. For example:

- *Jesus pointed to Himself as God in human flesh (John 8:58; 10:30).*
- *Jesus was explicitly identified as God by the apostles John and Paul, two men who encountered Jesus (John 1:1; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:5-6; Col. 1:15; Titus 2:13).*
- *Jesus was described as having divine attributes: omnipresent (Matt. 28:19-20), eternal (John 1:1-2), omnipotent (5:19), omniscient (16:30), and unchanging (Heb. 1:12).*
- *Jesus manifested divine prerogatives: He forgave sins (Matt. 9:2) and raised the dead (John 11:38-44).*
- *Jesus accepted divine worship and honor (Matt. 14:33, 28:9).*

TRANSITION: We can know we are born of God because Jesus is the Christ. In the next verses, we see that we can know we have eternal life because God's Word says so.

Study the Bible

1 John 5:11-13



10 MINUTES

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 1 John 5:11-13 on page 72 of the PSG.

GUIDE: Use Commentary **1** on pages 73-75 to help explain the testimony John described in this passage.

RECAP: God is faithful in His Word to encourage believers. He does not want Christians limping along in uncertainty. Twice in this short epistle, John referred to believers as conquerors (1 John 4:4; 5:5). God wants our lives to match our new identity. We are no longer lost enemies of God; we are conquerors in Christ, and we can know we have eternal life because God's Word says so.

God's Word teaches that every believer has eternal life in His Son. This is a life that will never fade, nor can it be taken away. You can lose your finances, your health, or your loved ones, but not your life in Christ. It is everlasting life. Your life in Christ is secured in heaven, guarded, and kept by God Himself (1 Pet. 1:4-5).

Many Christians died in the first three Christian centuries because of their testimony about Jesus. In many parts of the world today, the testimony of Christians still leads to their deaths; they become martyrs. During the twentieth century, more Christians died for their faith than the previous nineteen centuries combined. If the first two decades of the twenty-first century are any indication, more Christians will give testimony to Christ by their deaths this century than in the twentieth century. In verses 9-10, John stated that God's testimony was about His Son, Jesus Christ.

John began this letter by asserting that eternal life had been revealed (1 John 1:2). In verses 11-12, John specified God's testimony in two parts:

1. **God hath given us eternal life,** and
2. **this life is in his Son.**

First, the truth that God has given us eternal life is extraordinary. **Eternal life**, also rendered "everlasting life," can mean life without beginning or end. However, in the New Testament it most often refers to quality of life as it is meant to be, life with God in His kingdom, heaven. The fact God has given us this life is based on the truth that only the One who created everything has the ability and authority to present that gift. The tense of the verb **hath given** reveals a past completed action with a continuing result. When we were saved, God gave us the gift of eternal life. Nothing we could ever do would earn us that gift. Second, this life God gives us is **in his Son**. We can receive this gift of eternal life because it is present in Jesus Christ and in no other. Our responsibility and privilege as Christians is to share our faith with others so they too can receive that gift. Eternal life is a gift that God gives to all who trust in His Son.

Three important truths are taught about eternal life in verses 11-12:

1. Eternal life is a gift (not a prize to be earned).
2. Eternal life is found only in Christ.
3. Eternal life is a present possession for those who are saved.

John stated: **He that hath the Son hath life** in positive terms (see also John 3:16). To have the Son refers to Christ's indwelling presence in the believer's life. The grammar of this truth indicates that a person who has **the Son** must also of necessity have **life**. Verse 12 also reflects John 14:6; both of these verses point to the biblical

truth that Jesus is the only way to God. John also stated this truth in negative terms: **He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.** All people who refuse or neglect having Jesus in their lives are headed to hell. Eternal life *is present* in the believer's life and yet *it is not complete* and won't be realized fully until his or her death or Christ's return. Theologians refer to this as the *already but not yet*.

Verse 13. Perhaps more than any other verse in 1 John, verse 13 sums up John's purpose in writing this letter: assurance. The truth that Jesus Christ completed the work of salvation inspired John to write about assurance. We can be sure God saves us when we trust in Christ. The words **these things** likely refer to the entire letter of 1 John.

John's purpose was really fourfold:

1. His readers should hear;
2. While hearing they should believe;
3. While believing they should live; and
4. While living they should know.

John stated a very similar purpose in his Gospel account: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing ye might have life through his name*" (John 20:30-31, italics added). In 1 John, the apostle was not writing to persuade unbelievers of the truth, but rather he wrote to strengthen Christians (those who **believe on the name of the Son of God**) who might be tempted to doubt the reality of their Christian experience and therefore, eternal life. Contrary to the false teachers, John taught the biblical truth that "only Jesus is the *way* to God because only Jesus atoned for sin and then rose victorious from his grave. Only Jesus came from God, as God enfleshed in a human body like ours, and he came to reveal the otherwise unseen and invisible God. Therefore, any spiritual *truth* claims not based on this revelation of God in Christ are just whistling in the dark."² I can know I have eternal life because God's Word says so. ◀

1 JOHN 5:18-21

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

DO: Direct group members to complete "Engage" on page 76 of the PSG to help reinforce "The Point."

DISCUSS: Question #3 on page 72 of the PSG: "What does it mean to have life through the Son?"

Alternate: What aspect of eternal life is most exciting for you?

RECAP: If you have trusted in Christ for eternal life, then uncertainty of salvation should never be a cause of anxiety. We can know we have eternal life because God's Word says so. If you have believed and trusted Christ, you have eternal life. Period. "He that hath the Son hath life."

Maybe you are overcome with fear and doubt because you have never truly given your life to Christ. If so, then why wait? God loves you, and He showed this love by sending Jesus Christ to die for your sins on the cross. Simply acknowledge that you have sinned against Him and deserve death and separation from Him. Turn to Him by faith, confess with your mouth that He is Lord, tell Him you believe He is God's Son who died on the cross and rose again. Commit your life to Him. (You can read more about this on the inside front cover of this book.)

TRANSITION: In the next verses, we see that we can know we are saved because our lives have changed.

Study the Bible

1 John 5:18-21



15 MINUTES

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 1 John 5:18-21 on page 74 of the PSG.

RECAP: The nature of the new birth has an ongoing result. One of the lasting results of the new birth is a repentant life. It is not that believers will never sin, but they will not continually live in sin. Christians are those who continually repent. Refusing to repent or even having no concern at all over sin is evidence a person has never been transformed by the gospel, but proof of the new birth is a heightened awareness and sensitivity to sin. The new birth produces new behavior.

DISCUSS: Question #4 on page 75 of the PSG: “**How does God protect us from the evil one?**”

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

2 ▶ **Verse 18.** In verses 14-17, John continued his emphasis on assurance by stating truths about the confidence Christians have in prayer. With verses 18-20, John continued his focus on assurance by addressing what Christians know. Perhaps the best way to summarize these verses is with the application, I can know I am saved because my life has changed. In verse 21, John concluded this letter by warning Christians to refuse any substitutes for God.

John began verse 18 by stating **we know**. The pronoun *we* referred to John and the Christians he addressed. John stressed that God gave knowledge; people without God (false teachers and their followers) don’t have this knowledge. John then listed three related truths:

1. A Christian **sinneth not**;
2. Jesus protects (**keepeth**) Christians; and
3. Satan **toucheth not** Christians.

We need to understand each of these truths.

First, John wrote **whosoever is born of God sinneth not**. Given our self-reflection on our actions and attitudes, this truth is difficult to understand. Every person who has experienced the new birth remains God’s child with permanent privileges and obligations. One of these obligations is that the believer does not continue to live in sin. The Greek grammar indicates that John did not mean believers never slip into acts of sin, but that sin is not a habitual characteristic of the child of God. Sin and the child of God will sometimes meet, but they cannot live together in harmony. I can know I am saved because my life has changed.

Second, John revealed **he that is begotten of God keepeth himself**. Christians are assured of being kept safe by Jesus, **he that is begotten of God**. Christ **keepeth** (guards, protects, preserves) every believer. That Christ “keepeth himself” reflects the believer’s status of

being “in him” (1 John 2:27). The previous six uses of *keep* in 1 John refer to keeping God’s commands. In this context *keep* means that Jesus Christ will protect those born of God by giving them eternal life and preserving them (see John 10:28-29).

Third, John wrote that Satan, the devil, **that wicked one toucheth him not**, referring to the Christian. In this context, the word **toucheth** carries the sense of fastening oneself to or clinging to something. In its grammatical form here, it means “to kindle a fire” with the concept of “to assault.” John’s closing statement of this verse acknowledges that believers will face satanic attacks, but they are defended by One greater than Satan: Jesus Christ.

Verse 19. John revealed the two powers who control people in this world. First, John wrote about Christians that **we are of God**. In the remainder of this verse, John contrasted God’s control of believers with Satan’s control of everyone else: **the whole world lieth in wickedness**. Believers live in conflict because they live in two worlds: the present evil age, under the control of Satan, and the age to come, under the control of God.

Verse 20. John continued to list several additional truths that Christians **know**. First, John stated: **we know that the Son of God is come**. This truth refers not only to Jesus’ incarnation (becoming a human being), it also refers to Jesus’ entire life including His teaching, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Second, John revealed that Jesus **hath given us** (Christians) **an understanding**. The Greek word rendered as **understanding** refers to deep thought. It is related to our English *diagnosis*, the deep thought or understanding that properly assesses a situation. Third, John disclosed the purpose of this understanding: **that we may know him that is true**. Here the phrase rendered **him that is true** refers to God the Father. The phrase also describes God the Son in Revelation 3:7.

In 1 John 5:20, the writer continued to reveal truth: **and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ**. The only way people can be in **him that is true** is by being **in his Son Jesus Christ** (see John 14:6). This indwelling is accomplished at the point of salvation. How can we be “in” the true One (God)? God’s answer is the indwelling of Jesus Christ, His Son. The words **true God** indicate that there is *only one* true God. Except for the closing (5:21), 1 John ends with the words **eternal life**; John first mentioned eternal life in 1:2. It is significant

RECAP: Because believers are still tempted to sin, John gave one final exhortation, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” When we begin to give our hearts away to other things, we ruin our testimony to the world. Therefore, as Christ keeps us, let us guard our hearts against idols—anything we let come between us and our love and commitment to Christ.

DISCUSS: Question #5 on page 76 of the PSG: “**How has your life changed since you first encountered Christ?**”

Alternate: How can we guard ourselves from idols?

GUIDE: Use Commentary **2** on pages 76-78 to help explain the command to guard ourselves from idols.

LIVE IT OUT

We can be sure God saves us when we trust in Christ. Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Evaluate your life.** Does your life reflect the triad of assurance: faith, love, obedience? If you say yes, but not as well as it should, what changes need to be made in your life to better reflect these salvation qualities?
- ▶ **Align your life.** Have you started taking steps in your life to be a faithful witness? Practice sharing your testimony. Download the “Life on Mission” app on your phone, learn the presentation, and be prepared to share.
- ▶ **Make a difference in someone’s life.** Make an intentional effort to lead someone to faith in Christ this week. Set up a coffee or lunch meeting. Make it a priority to share the gospel. Remember, it’s not your job to save them, but God does want you to share. Trust Him for the results.

Live It Out



5 MINUTES

READ: Direct group members to page 77 of the PSG. Encourage them to choose one of the applications to carry out this week.

Wrap It Up

SUMMARIZE: Read or restate this idea from page 76 of the PSG:

Jesus Christ, in His great love on high, has embraced you, opened His arms to you, and keeps you eternally secure. You can be sure of your salvation when you have trusted in Christ.

PRAY: Thank God for the precious gift of His salvation. Ask Him to help group members walk in the confidence of that gift.



TIPS & TRAINING

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3 WAYS TO BUILD COMMUNITY IN YOUR BIBLE STUDY GROUP

When group members know, trust, and value each other, your group will flourish.

By Amber Vaden

Bible study groups are a vital piece of a church's ministry. So, what will keep your group members coming back week after week? Relationships are key. When members know, trust, and value each other, your group will flourish. A sense of community will increase engagement and attract new people to your group. We need healthy, strong relationships with other Christians, and a small group is a perfect place to find those! As a leader, you have opportunities each week to lay the groundwork for genuine community.

Here are three tips for building community that will reap significant rewards.

1. Invite group members to share their faith story.

It's common to be in a Bible study group with someone and not really know much of their faith journey. So, ask one member each week to share briefly about how they initially heard about Jesus and came to faith in Christ. This can be done in 5-7 minutes and will build community like nothing else. Offer your group members one or more of these questions to get started:

- Who was instrumental in shaping what you initially knew about Jesus?
- What are some of your early memories of church?
- What verse helped you understand what it means to follow Christ?

Ultimately, we're giving our group members an opportunity to share their testimony. We're also allowing them to hear the gospel! Our stories of what Jesus has done in our lives are powerful. They are personal, real, and heartfelt. Beginning your group time with a personal story will only amplify the truth of whatever Biblical text you will study: God is real, and He desires a relationship with His people.

2. Serve together sooner rather than later.

What opportunities exist for your group to minister together? Is there a need in your church or community that your group can meet? Choose one that fits the skills and time availability of your group. Then, make a plan to meet this need, involving as many members as possible. Your goal is simply to come together as the Body of Christ to meet a need. And, don't delay. The sooner your group gathers around a need to serve, the better. You'll be surprised at the variety of skills and talents your members possess. You'll also be building relationships and demonstrating the privilege

and responsibility we have of serving God together.

3. Make group member engagement a trademark of your weekly group time.

This is easier said than done. Honestly, it's simpler to prepare your Bible study and share it with limited discussion or group member engagement. But, investing the time and energy to increase the role of every group member in your meeting time will reap valuable dividends in the life of your group. Increase group member engagement by inviting someone to lead your prayer time. Ask volunteers to read aloud part of the Scripture passage you'll be studying. Invite someone to share church announcements or plan your next fellowship gathering.

Finally, ask open-ended discussion questions about what you are studying. Open-ended questions can be tricky! What if someone asks a question I cannot answer? How do we refocus if the discussion gets off topic? What about the person who will ramble for thirty minutes? Be prepared for those scenarios but ask those questions anyway! When group members discuss how God's Word has impacted their lives or which verses resonate with them this week, these opportunities form the foundation for deeper relationships and genuine community. Invite your members to speak up and be a part of the discussion. The benefits far outweigh the challenges.

It's no secret that God designed us for relationships, both with Him and each other. Being actively involved in a small group Bible study helps us to know God's Word better and teaches us how to apply it to our lives. With time and a few intentional choices, you can cultivate a sense of community that will take your group members beyond surface relationships to real fellowship. It's what God made us for.

Amber Vaden is an editor for Lifeway. When she's not creating resources for small group Bible study leaders, you'll find her exploring Tennessee, drinking tea, and cheering on Arkansas State University football.



THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONAL BIBLE STUDY

Lead your group through the process of talking about how the Bible applies to their lives.

By Chris Johnson

As a Bible study group leader, I love it when a class teaches itself through conversations among those in the group. A few years ago I was leading a Senior Adults Sunday School class. The topic was stewardship, and the conversation quickly turned to tithing. Discussion questions worked flawlessly on this day as group members talked about what they had been taught about tithing and who taught them this discipline. Testimonies of God's faithfulness to provide for our needs flowed freely that day. If anyone was in the room that day who did not practice tithing they were challenged by the Word of God and the life experiences of those in the

Discussion questions can potentially be the basis for teaching the group.

group to consider being obedient in their giving to God.

I learned early in ministry that teaching group Bible studies wasn't necessarily in my wheelhouse; it wasn't my strength as a leader. But I also discovered that I could be an effective leader if I followed the teaching plan of a curriculum that specialized in group discussion. Over time I came to realize that some teaching plans were better than others, depending on who wrote the leader's guide. You see, some people just know how to ask questions that create a conversation within the group.

Today, I work as a content editor for *Bible Studies for Life*. As a team, we strive to create Bible studies that help facilitate discussion within the small group around the biblical text. Our sessions are built on five discussion questions that will stimulate conversation among group members. Our goal is to create discussion questions that will essentially lead the group through the process of talking about how the Bible text applies to their lives. The discussion questions can potentially be the basis for teaching the group. We lead with an icebreaker that creates interest and is an easy "on ramp" to the Bible study.

We try not to go too deep too fast, but the text determines if this is possible. We keep in mind asking questions in such a way that anyone in the group would feel comfortable

contributing to the discussion. Personal application of the truths discovered in Scripture are the goal for the questions moving toward the end of the session.

We encourage those who facilitate conversations to keep in mind these principles regarding group discussion:

- Be intentional to involve as many people as possible in the discussion.
- Don't let one person dominate the conversation.
- Be OK with silence after you ask questions. Don't succumb to the temptation to answer questions because of a brief delay as people think about how to respond.
- You may need to adjust the questions for your specific group.
- It's always good to have alternative questions (which we also provide) in case some questions don't work for your group.
- Unbelievers may be in your group who need to be given the opportunity to be a part of the discussion.
- Not all believers are at the same level of spiritual development.
- Trust your leader guide.

Chris Johnson is the content editor for *Bible Studies for Life, Senior Adults*.