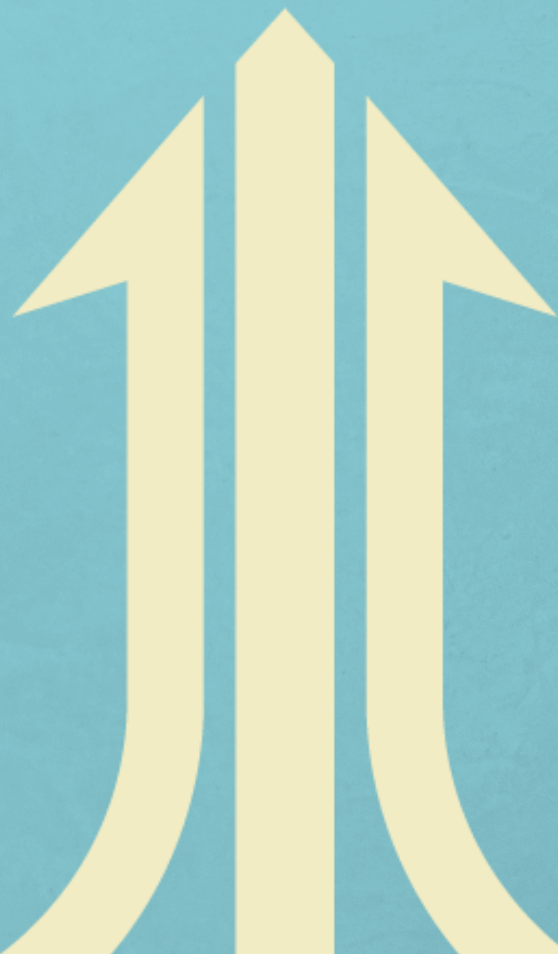


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LORDSHIP MATTERS

STUDY GUIDE

WITH POINTS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION



Spiritual Growth Study Guide for either Individual or Group Study

Some Encouragement and Recommendations

- Read the book at your own pace. Underline things that speak to you. If something doesn't make sense or line up with what you believe, that's fine - just make a note and keep on reading. The book is meant to be a challenge to some typical Christian understandings and experiences.
- Go back and read it through again - read and reflect.
- Mine the book for your personal take aways. God will speak to you in the way He has uniquely wired you. He may show you things that the author never intended to say or express in the book. And that's perfectly fine as long as it lines up with God's Word.
- Establish a journal just for the purposes of this study guide. Write down your answers to the questions. Journal through your challenges and your prayers to God as He guides you through to new spiritual growth in these areas.

Introduction

1. On pages 1 and 2 the author shares His personal salvation story along with his struggles to realize and personalize what that meant for him. Think about your own first time salvation experience and some of the challenges that may have come since then in your attempt to walk it out, live it out, and understand it. Share these thoughts with a close and unpack them in a deeper way with a fellow believer as you share together.

For the purposes of group discussion try to synthesize and summarize briefly what your first time salvation experience was like, and what the heart of any challenges or struggles that followed may have been. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Example: I was saved at a powerful and emotional church service or event. I felt the presence of God in that moment and knew what I had to do. But then as time passed I tried to live by rules. Condemnation was an issue for me. I struggled to walk in the grace of God, but I am growing in that area now and living a more grace filled, grace soaked life.

2. The author talks about the constructs of religion verses relationship towards the bottom of page 2. This is a vital key for the entire book; that we might re-evaluate what salvation looks like as lived out through an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. He then shares the "break through moment" story that really unfolded the fresh revelation that gave birth to the book. You may have had some really bad relationships with people, with parents or with family. Maybe unpack with a close friend what you would expect a "healthy" relationship to be like. Think about what God's Word says about His love for you, His sacrifice for you, and His will for your life.

For the purposes of group discussion maybe just identify one of God's attributes that reveal what a healthy relationship with Him looks like to you. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

If you have a "break through moment," in your journey with the Lord take some time with someone close to unpack that in detail and listen and share with one another those "break through moment" stories.

For the purposes of group discussion try to summarize the heart of a "break through moment" you have experienced so others may relate. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Example: I used to think that certain routines or rituals in my devotional time were the key to a healthy walk with Jesus Christ. But now I realize it is the truth and the heart behind those daily routines, and not the routines themselves. I was bound by the ritual but now I am free to rest in the Lord and be spontaneous as I seek Him and pray for my day.

3. Take some time to write down what impacted you after reading through the introduction. Share these thoughts with a spouse or close friend and have a conversation about those ideas.

For the purposes of group discussion summarize what impacted you from the introduction. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Example: I loved how the author really shared from his personal experience. I feel like I know Him a little better and now I want to hear more what he has to say.



Chapter One Essential Elements

1. The author writes on p.8 about the concept of authority identifying lordship. What leads us lords us. This can be an abstract idea that might be hard to grasp at first. For example a hobby that consumes too much time in our life should be identified as a lord. Take some time to identify these areas that could be lording over you in your life. Be transparent with God about them. Ask Him to help you identify those areas that are taking time and worship from him.

For the purpose of group discussion pick one area and briefly share your awareness of it with the group. Ask for prayer support and encouragement in this area. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: I struggle with seeking out affirmation from others instead of finding it from God and in His Word. I find myself getting in conversations that fish for complements. Insecurity and fear of not getting affirmation are lording over me.

I tend to obsess over my kids or my adult children, they consume my time way too much. I struggle to keep my heart focused on trusting God with them. I struggle to give Him my attention and worship Him when I am consumed with worry, concern or fear about my kids.

2. Belief is explained by the author as evidenced in the way we live. He writes on page 10 that we partner with the power that offers life to us. Again, those false lords give us a false sense of life. It is a very powerful and deceptive agreement we often end up enforcing with our belief system. Try and think of a false belief that you have come into agreement with. Confess it to God and ask Him to help you break that false belief. Determine to change the way you speak and live as a result.

For the purposes of group discussion pick one potential false belief and share with the group. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Example: *I realized that I am in bondage to having to be overly active at my church. What started out as a desire to serve the Lord is now an unhealthy compulsion. It's all I talk about. My life started to be validated by how many church activities I was involved in and I was affirmed by the recognition that gave me. It became about me serving, not about the One I was serving.*

3. The author talks about revealed truth on page 11. He is really emphasizing the difference between a revelation and a mental assent. The way he helps the reader understand is by comparing it to an "aha moment." Can you think of a time you had such a moment? It can be about anything. Relive that moment and ask yourself is your faith in God and in Christ Jesus stem from a revelation, or merely a compulsion to follow a religious set of obligations. As you read and study God's Word, worship Him and spend time in prayer, ask God to reveal Himself in a powerful and personal way. Maybe in a new and fresh way, a deeper way than you have experienced before.

For the purposes of group discussion pick one "aha" moment you have had in your life. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: The day you realized ginger-ale was had ginger in it! The time Algebra finally made sense! (for some of us that never happened.) When you became aware of salvation by grace through faith and stopped working to be saved.

4. The author shares on page 13 how simple repentance really is by describing it as turning away from something and turning toward something else. Think about how easily your attention gets turned away from God and toward other things. Think about the challenge it is for all of us to consistently stay turned towards the Lord Jesus, and away from our selfish pursuits. What a challenge it is to walk consistently towards God! Think about a time when you walked away from a bad habit and never looked back. Mediate on God's goodness and help with that decision. Ask Him for strength and guidance to continue walking way from all that isn't of Him, towards all that is Him.

For the purposes of group discussion describe an issue that keeps turning you heart away from the Lord. Be brave, be specific and make a sincere resolve to the group to change permanently this behavior or issue. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: My weakness is over indulgence. What starts as enjoying a little, ends up being too much. This could be anything from food, to TV, to chatting that leads to gossip. I need to just keep up with a dedicated quiet time of prayer and Bible study. I need to turn away from comfort and lack of discipline and establish a habit that promotes healthy spiritual growth.



Chapter Two The Law of Lordship Overview

1. The topic of confession in chapter two is a huge concept that undergirds the entire book. The author's paraphrase helps unpack the depth of what a confession of Christ Jesus as Lord should really look like. Both our mouths, (what we say) and our lives (what we do) are a huge sign post that indicates what we agree with. Think about some common phrases that are on your lips every day. How do those confirm Jesus as Lord or disagree with that truth? Talk this through with a close friend or accountability person. Ask God to show you and ask Him to help you change where needed.

For the purpose of group discussion share some unhealthy confessions. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: "Bad things always happen to me." "Nothing I do ever works out." "That is unbelievable!" "I am so sick and tired." Or examine your life testimony as a confession. Are you speaking about a God of abundance but your finances are a mess due to mis management? Do you talk about a God who wants us healthy and whole but sickness is constant? These all indicate what is being expressed by our lives isn't what is intended by the Lord. It's normal to go through things, it isn't God's desire for you to invite them, welcome them and live in affirmation that they have dominion in your life as a believer.

2. From here on out these principles of names, natures, and needs will enforce the key concept of the book and the, "Matters of Lordship." Take some time to think about these ideas.

For the purposes of group discussion share one observation you have concerning one of these ideas. Names, natures, and needs. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: Do you know anyone whose nature matches their name? Maybe a girl named, "Sunny" seems bright and cheery all the time. Have you noticed any patterns that show someone or somethings nature? Do you have a pet cat that seems finicky? Does it seem makes sense to you that we describe the nature of cats as finicky? How about the idea of need. What do plants need? They need air and sunlight. And when those needs are met, they thrive as they were intended. Producing the air we breathe, and the food we need for life.



Chapter Three: The Name of the Lord is the Nature of the Lord

1. This chapter helps us see that natures and names go hand in hand. God's Word gives us all the names of who He is. As the great I AM - He wants to reveal himself to us. Spend some time searching out the names of God and think about who He wants to be in you, for you and through you. Focus on one of the names and take note of how He shows himself faithful to His nature in your life. Share with a friend or spouse how He is revealing himself to you in that way. Journal about His name and His nature as often as possible.

For the purposes of group discussion briefly describe a name of the Lord that has become real to you personally. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: You may have found the Lord to be your strength during a season of extended hardship. There may be times when you experience sudden break-throughs of abundance.

2. The more challenging concept of this chapter is to recognize the enemy as the counterfeit I AM. He steals kills and destroys in obvious ways, but most often in very subtle and subversive ways. He capitalizes on the principle of making His nature become your "I AM" so He can become your lord. Think of some ways Satan, the Father of Lies, our enemy as believers manifests in negative ways in your life. Start making a record, or write in your journal when and where you discover these issues.

For the purposes of group discussion share an instance where you realized the enemy was fulfilling a need and masquerading as your I AM. Be brave, these are tough to recognize and admit. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: The enemy was stealing my peace. I had become so accustomed to overthinking and worrying about everything. He became Lord I AM WORRY in my life. It was the only thing I knew. I thought I was being diligent in praying for things and talking about life's issues but it really was worry and fear that added stress and physical sickness to my life.

The enemy made me think my talent was my treasure and I became driven to be seen prominently for my talent. He was stealing my reward found in trusting the Lord to make a way for and use the gift God gave me for His glory in His timing and of His choosing. My view of talent became a false Lord. The enemy became "Lord I AM never accepted" for my talent.



Chapter Four: Our Need: The Nature of the Lord Is Our Need for the Lord.

1. The idea of this chapter is this: We are made to be like God in His image and likeness. But whatever we make god, will make us in their image and likeness as well. This creates co-dependency. We should be Jesus Christ as Lord I AM codependent - but too often we are a myriad of other things co-dependent. Can you think of ways we are created to need the Lord God - Jesus Christ? Write in your journal about those ways. Talk about them with a friend.

For the purposes of group discussion share a nature of God that you realize you are in need of. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: Because I have sinned, I need the forgiver, the atoner, the redeemer. I need those natures to fill me so grace can adorn my walk of salvation. I have a need for His creative image to come alive in me so I can speak life, and create His kingdom and release His will on earth as it is in heaven. There are some examples in the book as well.

2. The things that aren't submitted to the Lord in our lives will often take over. The author talks about how our need to feed the flesh can exist as a barrier to recognizing our true need for only the Lord Jesus Christ I AM. In what ways have you become needy and self fulfilling? Ask someone close to express what they see and hear in your life. Our confession, or our conversation points to who is fulfilling our need and taking place as Lord.

For the purpose of group discussion try and locate some false "need meeters" in your life. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: My mind was being occupied by entertainment, or the daily news. I actually started to need this. And the Word of God as my daily bread took a back seat. Respect from my peers, and my position at work started to be my affirmation. I realized working as unto the Lord, no matter what my position, or what my job description is should be a source of satisfaction in the Lord I AM fulfilling my need from Him.



Chapter Five: Releasing Salvation: The Need for the Lord in Us Is the Need of the Lord through Us

1. The final matter the author talks about is the result of the first two matters. What we say, from what we believe, according to a nature and a need creates the kingdom we live in. Salvation then isn't just a Christian thought, to have salvation is literally to be whole. God's salvation makes us whole in Him. But the enemy wants us to feel whole in what he has to offer. Think about how God has used you by moving through You according to His nature. Write about those experiences. Mark them down as part of His salvation continuing to flow through your life.

For the purpose of group discussion try and share when you were aware God's wholeness for you was moving through you releasing salvation. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: Gods nature as good gift giver has allowed me to be generous with my finances and my time in serving others. He is the good giver, so I receive Him and His generosity towards me and I am able to show love to others through generosity. As the Wonderful Counselor He has ministered to me and I have been able to share wise timely counsel from His Word into others lives.

2. Often what we say and what we believe doesn't reflect the truth of God's Word. Our confession from our false beliefs empowers other lords to move in our lives, hindering the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you identify areas where this is the case in your life? Ask someone close to help you see where you would have blind spots in this area. Be vulnerable. Give them to God and pray for the Holy Spirit to empower you to change.

For the purposes of group discussion talk about an area you struggle with that releases wholeness to the enemy's plan and kingdom instead of Gods. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: I realized explosive anger was releasing darkness and emotionally wounding those I love. My emotional outbursts in times of stress had me saying things I would regret. And I started to see those around me. I realized how overly critical I am and I can see how I started believing the worst of people and expecting things to be a bad experience wherever I went

3. On page 60 the author talks about establishing a Lord-Need-Focused Prayer Life. This is considerably challenging when we are used to always seeking the Lord for what we need. James is trying to help us see that when we seek God for what He needs, then God will have free access to meet any other needs we think we may have. Take some personal inventory on the amount of requests that occupy your prayer life. Is there a way you can reframe your time with the Lord so the emphasis is on seeking Him and asking Him what He needs from you? Journal about how this transforms your prayer life.

For the purposes of group discussion share how this idea challenges you. Express some ways in which you need to re-focus your prayer life towards living to meet the needs of the Lord. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: I was always asking God to bless my finances. Then I started worshipping Him as Lord I AM Provider. I asked Him to show me how to serve him by being generous to others. As I stewarded my finances and trusted Him blessings started to flow more freely. I was so church focused with my worship – thinking worship was only about the church service and about when I privately sang praise and worship. Those acts were meeting my relational needs with the Lord. But then He showed me how serving those in need around me was also an act of worship to Him and it allowed His salvation to move through me, showing His love to those around me.



Chapter Six: The Lord of Wisdom

1. The author lays out an argument for the priority of wisdom. In essence, God knows better than we do and He wants to lead us into His way of knowing. Wisdom is the principle thing. It releases every other thing. But too often God's way is the opposite of the way we think. Can you think about ways God imparted something to you that helped you and it was contrary to conventional thinking? What are some challenges you have staying under His Lordship as the Only Wise God? Write about those in your journal. Talk them over with friends.

For the purposes of group discussion share how this topic may have challenged you. Or share something the wisdom of God has revealed to you that made a difference in your walk with Him. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: One time I had a good job opportunity and after seeking the Lord I turned it down. Later I found out what He had after that opportunity was better and more in line with where he was leading me. After seeking wisdom I was able to disconnect from some toxic relationships I hadn't realized were harming me.



Chapter Seven: Finally

1. In this chapter James is trying to give some practical ways to start applying the Matters of Lordship to your life. A key component to applying any teaching from God's Word is love. on p. 86 he talks about keeping the reason in mind for our faith. Write down how this challenges or encourages you. Set some new goals or daily reminders to walk this out.

For the purposes of group discussion share a thought about living a life of love that not only loves God but loves others. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: Love for neighbor is a challenge because I don't like my neighbors! I like my friends at church. I am too busy with church activities or family activities to act in a meaningful way to my neighbor. It's a huge challenge.

2. The author on page 88 gives an example prayer. He uses the name and nature of Jesus Christ Lord I AM Peace. Study through all the names and natures of God and work them into this model prayer, and then start developing similar prayer models to guide you in this manner of praying.

For the purposes of group discussion share what was most impacting to you about the book and the revelation of the Matters of Lordship. The goal is for as many to share as possible even though some may not.

Examples: I just didn't realize my belief and my words that were used to confess Jesus as Lord and receive Salvation, could be used in the same way to work against the work of the Lord in my life, and work for the enemy. I realized salvations wasn't just something that happened to me, but that is should continually happen through me.