This study guide is provided for individuals who would like to journal through the book or for group study and discussion. Feel free to print them out for individual or group use, but please do not publish. The "lessons" are meant to be suggestions as to how much a group might study in one session. Of course, feel free to go at your own pace.

BE ADVISED: This study tends to bring up the discussion of personal information. I suggest that if you do this in a group, that the participants be well-established friends or that the group be limited by number of participants or by gender. It needs to be acceptable (perhaps even encouraged) for participants to NOT share details they prefer to keep private and that all information shared in the group remain private. Personally, I would do this alone or with one or two close and trusted friends. Additionally, since the book introduces concepts that might be new to the reader, participants should agree to read the material and do the study/discussion pages *prior* to discussing it together.

**Lesson One[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Prologue

**Main Points**

1. No everyone processes information in the same way. It comes to each of us through a filter of present knowledge and our experiences, and sometimes our ability to “hear” is limited by what we don’t know and haven’t experienced.
2. The Holy Spirit is able to get through to people where we cannot. We can share good news with others and trust that He can get through to the heart when our efforts fall short.
3. So, while studying the content of this book, trust God to get through your own filters and teach you what you need to know. You might not yet be able to agree with everything written in this book, but please consider what is shared and then take from it what you find helpful.

**Discuss**

* Have you ever noticed a communication filter when trying to communicate or seen in yourself the inability to understand someone because of your own filter?
* How have you tried to overcome this aspect of communication?

Introduction

**Main Points**

1. Life is full of challenges. Most of them can be faced by simply doing what is needed for success.
2. It’s OK to research, ask for help, and try different approaches when facing difficulties. Sometimes, we find the help we need.
3. However, sometimes, we face situations (many of them involving people or circumstances beyond our personal control) that don’t seem to respond to our diligent efforts or new formulas. The author calls these situations “the overwhelming” because after all of our hard work, nothing we do seems to help.
4. Sometimes our overwhelming situations become public knowledge or are obvious to others. On top of feeling discouraged about it, we can become embarrassed or feel shame.
5. These types of situations can leave us feeling lonely, defeated, and hopeless.
6. The author states her purpose for writing this book this way: “My objective in writing this is to set you on a path better than that of endlessly trying—one that can help you to overcome the overwhelming simply by believing in Him.”

**Discuss**

* Can you relate to the author when she says that there are some situations which don’t seem to respond to our own diligent efforts?
* When you face what seem like impossible situations, do you tend to blame yourself or do you inclined to blame other things or other people? Do you have a tendency to blame God when things seem overwhelming?
* What might she mean when she says, “This book is meant to build you up, not to burden you down with yet another ‘spiritual discipline’ or formula for success.”
* What might it mean to “overcoming the overwhelming by grace through faith”?
* The author chose as her key verse for the entire book 1 John 5:4-5 (pg. xxiv). What might this verse tell us about her point of view in writing this book?

**Lesson Two: Days 1 and 2**

Day 1 From Frustration to Faith

**Main Points**

1. It is not uncommon for us to become exhausted and want to give up when situations become overwhelming.

*“Forlorn and confused, crying about situations which were completely over my head and seemingly out of my control, I’ve been tempted to throw in the towel and admit defeat—weary of the fight.”*

1. When dealing with difficult situations, we want to share with others, but sometimes get tired of not really being heard.

*“I concluded that it just was not worth the risk of exposing the most painful area of my life to anyone if it meant once again being misunderstood.”*

1. Most advice-givers mean well, but unsolicited advice can send unintended messages to the person who is struggling.
   1. You don’t know you have a problem (even though it might be obvious).

*“‘Informing’ someone with an obvious problem that he has a problem is ridiculous and offensive.”*

* 1. You are willfully ignorant.

*“It implies that they are merely meandering through life with no direction whatsoever—that they are so clueless that it hasn’t even dawned on them to educate themselves.”*

* 1. You aren’t trying hard enough and lack self-control.

*“He has tried but has experienced very few results. So, when someone offers up their words of wisdom, he listens, but often feels lectured instead of helped.*

* 1. I don’t approve of you.

*“He might interpret advice as a message the he is not good enough to be loved unconditionally—he must be fixed first.”*

1. The title of the book is OVERCOMING the overwhelming because the author believes that we don’t have to accept these situations, and that there is an answer.

*“Although I have many times felt inundated by long-term struggles, amazing victories are mine where I’d only known despair.”*

1. God is the only One who knows everything about our situations which makes Him the perfect person to understand and to help us. When we ask him for wisdom, He will give it to us.

*“The answer was not to be found in a new formula or renewed doses of diligence, but in His grace—His grace would be enough.”*

**Discuss**

* How is it that a person could begin to feel alone when facing a long-term difficulty?
* From the perspective of an “advice-giver”, what might we do to improve the way we “help” people?
* Have you ever experienced God giving you grace in a situation you thought you’d never conquer? Share, if you’d like.
* When you face these times in life, do you prefer to deal with it privately or ask for help? With either means being and acceptable way to cope, why do you prefer to do one or the other?

Day 2 Overcoming Overwhelming Sin

**Main Points**

1. Not all Christians are struggling with sin. Many have learned the truth that because they are under grace and not under law, sin has no dominion over them (Rom. 6:14).
2. When considering why it is that a person struggles with sin (Gal. 5:19-21, 1 Cor. 6:9-11) the first question to consider is if he/she is truly a Christian, because Paul declares in Romans 6 that Christians are dead to and free from sin.
3. A person becomes a Christian when he/she BELIEVES and confesses that Jesus is who He claims to be (God in the flesh) and that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10). It’s not enough to join a church, recite a prayer, try to live by the words of Jesus, or be declared a Christian by some religious organization.
4. The normal Christian way of life is NOT to be overtaken by sin, but rather to be free from it. Not only that, a Christian is to consider himself/herself as dead to sin and has the power to not yield to it.
5. However, some Christians do seem to be overcome by sin instead of overcoming it. The author gives three main reasons:

* *A Christian sometimes doesn’t resist initial temptation to sin and becomes emotionally or physically addicted to the behavior. This person still believes in Jesus, but is more akin to the Prodigal Son. Others might still be in fellowship but be engaged in a private sin or addiction.*
* *Some Christians become involved in sin as they begin to mix law with grace. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 that “the power of sin is the law.” So, as we begin to see our right-standing with God to be based on our obedience to laws (not just the law of Moses, but other Christians laws such as the concept of “spiritual disciplines”), we begin to fall into the trap Paul described in Romans 7, that of doing what we don’t want and not doing what we think we should. This person still believes in Jesus, but gets caught up in the lie that this back and forth life of sin is the “normal” Christian life.*
* *The third reason Christians fall into sin is that they are falsely taught that not only is it normal to struggle with sin, but that they are still a sinner with a sinful nature. In other words, they do not know who they are in Christ. They do not know they are free from sin. They do not know that they are holy saints, righteous, forgiven, and blameless in His sight.*

**Discuss**

1. Did you ever consider yourself to be a Christian for some other reason than FAITH in Jesus?[[2]](#footnote-2) Explain.
2. Have you ever known someone who claimed to be a Christian, but whose life in NO WAY indicated that he/she was a Christian? How can we help those who seem sympathetic to “being a Christian” but who still might only be so culturally or religiously, find true faith?
3. **Without going into the details about the sin itself**, share how God has set you free from an overwhelming sin.[[3]](#footnote-3) Was it through learning about who you are in Christ, being changed from the inside out, by being set free from law, or some other way?
4. Was there a sentence or paragraph that stood out to you in this chapter that you’d like to share or remember? Explain why it seems important or how it affects you.

**Lesson Three: Days 3 and 4**

Day 3 Not by Law

**Main Points**

1. We were born again by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). We live by grace through faith. We overcome overwhelming situations in life by grace through faith. If we try to overcome the impossible by formula and willpower, we can often end up frustrated and defeated.
2. “Law” can take on many forms. Here the ones discussed in this chapter.

* *Blame and Shame*
* *Formula Living*
* *Behavior Modification*
* *New Year’s Resolutions*
* *Self-Improvement*
* *Advice*
* *Try Harder, Do More*
* *Help Me Obey*

**Discuss**

1. What does it mean to you personally to live “by grace through faith” and not by law?
2. The methods listed above can help us solve many problems, but none of them actually bring about a change of heart, only behavior. In what ways do the above acts as laws? What are their alternatives?
3. Share a quote from this chapter that stands out to you.

Day 4 Sin Consciousness

**Discuss**

1. Living by grace through faith can involve God showing us certain things we are doing that we think we *should* do in order to improve, but are actually serving to keep us bound. In this chapter, the author shares that in response to her request for God to show her how to overcome by grace through faith, He pointed out to her that there was something in her life that was producing sin consciousness. In what ways might sin consciousness frustrate a person in his/her efforts to gain victory over an impossible circumstance?
2. In what ways does living free from sin consciousness (knowing that we are forgiven and that God is not holding our sins against us) guide us toward success? (Or, in what ways does being sin conscious keep us bound and defeated?)
3. Some think that being free from the consciousness of sin will cause us to sin more often. Explain why it is so important to understand that this is not true.
4. Share a favorite quote or Bible verse from this chapter.

**Lesson Four: Days 5 and 6**

Day 5 Living by Grace through Faith

**Main Points**

1. We are to live by grace through faith, but the message of Ephesians 2:8-9 often is distorted to something more like this.

***Efarceus 2:8-9***

*For by law you continue to be saved by obedience; it is by your diligent discipline and sacrifice, the requirement of God, 9by works, so that you may humbly boast.*

1. Basically, what we are implying is that Jesus got the ball rolling through His death and resurrection, but now that we are saved, it’s up to US to maintain our salvation through our own efforts. While we do mature and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, we are right now **complete** in Him (Col. 2:9-10).
2. Our hearts are established by grace, not through the keeping of laws and formulas (Heb. 13:9).
3. We need to be aware of and take heed to the warnings of Jesus and of Paul. There are wolves within the “Christian” world who seek to undermine the gospel of grace and take us captive for less than noble purposes.

**Discuss**

1. Those who teach that we must add law to grace often do so for less than noble reasons. Others, mix law into grace out of positive motivations. How is it that either one of these scenarios can be true? What might it sound/look like? How can we avoid this trap of mixing law into grace? Why is this so important?

Day 6 Allowing Grace to Permeate Your Life

**Main Points**

1. When someone has been buried in layers of law for perhaps many years, it can take a good amount of time to get free. Some have described this process as removing grave clothes. David and I saw it as being tied in hundreds of knots inside, and each time we saw a truth, that knot was released and new life began to flow in that area of our lives.
2. Sadly, mixing law into grace can leave a trail of devastation, especially when it comes to relationships. When we see the damage that has been done, it is no easy task to undo it because it involves someone else. That person might still be entrenched in law or be damaged and resentful about how our beliefs and subsequent actions hurt them.
3. Marriage, which is supposed to be an example of Christ and the Church is most greatly damaged by law and formula to the point where two people who truly love each other don’t know how to peacefully live with each other. Because this relationship is so close to the heart, change can be very painful and slow.
4. Allowing grace to permeate our lives involves RECEIVING the love and grace God extends to us with all of our shortcomings, and then EXTENDING grace to others.

**Discuss**

1. Why do you think that mixing law into grace causes such devastating effects on relationships, especially marriage?
2. How does “grace for me, but no grace for you” undermine our efforts to improve our relationships?
3. Discuss the importance and freedom of understanding that the only behavior you can change is your own. Why might it take perhaps even years of practicing this truth for it to take effect in the heart of someone else?

**Lesson Five: Days 7 and 8**

Day 7 Needing New Faith

**Main Points**

1. It is not uncommon for us to be experiencing success in most of the areas of our lives, but still struggle with one or two others.
2. Sometimes, a new area arises from what seems to be out of nowhere, and when we try to employ our faith to the new situation, nothing seems to work.
3. God hasn’t changed. What we know and believe hasn’t changed. So we come to a point where our faith needs to grow.
4. Some have been exposed to teachings about faith that were not scriptural. One extreme is to make faith a work; another is to diminish its importance.
5. “Although it made me a little uncomfortable, I had to admit, that for some reason, my faith was not rising to the occasion during my health crisis. I found myself praying, ‘Lord, increase my faith. Show me what I’m missing here.’ I didn’t do this with an ounce of guilt or shame, only with the acute awareness that I needed help.” (The point here being that it is OK to ask God to increase our faith.)
6. It doesn’t take a superabundance of faith to see big things happen.
7. Our faith can grow exceedingly to meet new or greater challenges.
8. The mistake commonly made when needing new faith is to think that it’s up to us to “make” it happen. “Let the grunting and groaning begin.”
9. While we wait to learn how to see our faith grow, we can continue affirming and confessing what we already know and believe to be true.
10. The happy “ending” to this story is that the author’s faith did grow, and the multiple issues with her health were all resolved, some by natural means and others supernaturally. Glory to God!

**Discuss**

1. Did this chapter “ring a bell” in your mind—make you think of a similar situation you are facing that seems resistant or as if you are “missing something”, or perhaps that you seem to conquer one day and then another day experience defeat? Share if you’d like without going into too much detail.

Day 8 Finding Faith

**Main Points**

1. Romans 10:17 states that faith comes (originates) from hearing and hearing by the word of God.
2. “Word of God” in context does not refer to the Bible, rather to “glad tidings of good things”.
3. We can see natural faith demonstrated every day. We hear good news. We believe it. We act on it.
4. God’s principle/pattern for receiving faith is evident:

* The good news of His grace exists.
* The good news is preached/shared.
* We hear the good news.
* Faith comes to us—we believe the good news (faith = belief).
* We confess/speak / act upon what we believe about the good news we’ve heard.
* The answer comes for whatever we need—salvation, healing, etcetera.

1. Faith isn’t something we “try”. It comes to us when we hear the glad tidings of good things. Someone who claims that he/she “tried” to get saved, but didn’t, is missing something.
2. The example is given of the woman with the issue of blood hearing the glad tidings that Jesus was healing ALL who asked Him. This good news brought faith to her heart (she believed it). She said in her heart that if she could just touch His garment, she’d be healed. She acted upon her belief. She was healed.
3. Jesus told the woman, “YOUR faith has made you well.” We see here the principle that even though faith is a gift to us, it is OUR faith. Her faith not only included what she believed, but what she said and did. She could have refused to believe, or refused to confess, or refused to go, but she didn’t. She chose to act on her faith and was healed.

**Discuss**

1. **Thinking Ahead: How might this principle of supernatural faith apply to some of these situations? What might be the good news in these areas that will bring faith to our hearts? Or, perhaps some would like to share how faith came to them in some of these areas.**

* Dead-end employment
* Stressful time in life
* Frustrating or unhappy marriage
* Never-ending financial struggles
* Unfulfilled dreams or plans in our lives
* What seems to be a hopeless relationship with family or friends
* Inability to get control of our lives (home, yard, office, etc.)
* Health problems or goals
* Wrongs done to us (or done by us) in the past
* Depression or just that blah feeling that never seems to end

**Lesson Six: Day 9**

Day 9 Good News

**Main Points and Discussion**

**This chapter focusses on good news that can be applied to any situation we face. Discuss how each truth (good news) brings faith to our hearts and changes our lives.**

1. **God Sees You and Hears You**

*“We can rest assured that even when others cannot see or understand what it is we are experiencing, God sees us and our pain and has great compassion for us.”*

**Discuss:** Sometimes our situations are partially a result our own doing. Even when this is true, God does not abandon us. He comforts, provides, and directs. Have you ever believed differently? How does understanding this truth give us faith?

1. **God Knows the Truth**

*“It’s such a joy to just sit down with Him and know that He knows. We can be completely open before Him because we don’t need to hide or pretend.”*

**Discuss:** Why does this good news that we don’t need to try and justify ourselves before God or anyone else because God knows what the real truth is, bring us rest (set us free)?

1. **God Cares for You**

**Discuss:** Why is it that we can confidently give God the things that overwhelmingly concern us?

1. **God is for You Not Against You**

“*Hear this! God is not against you. He is for you. He is not sending evil to teach you. Yes, He really is on your side. He wants you to be successful. He wants your relationships to be enjoyable. He is right this very minute working all things together for your good, not for your downfall—no matter how you feel, no matter what it looks like, God is for you.”*

**Discuss:** Have you always believed this? If not, what errors were your previously taught that negated this truth that God is for you and NOT against you? Do you still catch yourself thinking that hardships are from God to “teach” you something? Why might it be that we should constantly remind ourselves of this truth?

1. **Nothing is Impossible for God or for You**

**Discuss:** How powerful might this truth be—that nothing is impossible to those who believe in Him? What might happen if we received these glad tidings of good thing? How might things change for us?

1. **God is Willing**

The author shares a story that perfectly illustrates this good news. How does it change everything to know that God is willing—to settle forever the doubt that he might NOT be willing? What false beliefs were keeping Cathy’s cousin from the faith that she needed to see her son healed? Can you detect from her story what changed in her mind that allowed her to receive this amazing miracle?

1. **God Wants Us to Ask**

*“We all want to please God, but seldom give thought to the truth that God wants to please us. He wants to answer our prayers.”*

**Discuss:** Do you remember ever thinking that praying for your own needs was selfishness? How difficult is it to forsake the lie that God despises our prayers for our needs and embrace the truth that He WANTS us to ask? More importantly, how can this glorious glad tiding of good things change the way we pray and relate to God as our Father?

1. **God is Right Here Right Now**

*“We don’t need to enter His presence because His presence has once and for all time entered us.”*

**Discuss:** How does knowing that we are one spirit with the Lord change **EVERYTHING**? More specifically, how can this grace bring faith and comfort to our hearts when storms rage and we feel overwhelmed?

1. **He Will Never Leave You or Forsake You**

*“When we face hard times, we need to know that everything between God and us is right, but sometimes our overwhelming circumstances are so intense that we might feel as if we are forsaken by God.”*

**Discuss:** How do the verses given in this section provide us with good news and thus strenthen our faith?

1. **Nothing Can Separate You from His Love**

*“If He loved us enough to die for us when we were His enemies, shall He not now love us all the more now that we are His children? Shall God only have compassion on the lost, but then turn His back on us? This is completely illogical.”*

**Discuss:** How important is it for us to know that NOTHING can separate us from His love? How does knowing and believing this truth produce faith in our hearts and change how we believe and behave?

**Discuss**

In the next chapter, the author encourages the reader to discover other good news specific to his/her situation, but how can the core truths listed above help us with ANYTHING we face? In what ways does understanding that God loves us change EVERYTHING?

**Lesson Seven: Day 10**

Day 10 Discovering Specific Good News

**Main Points and Discussion**

**The truths shared in the previous chapter can give us faith throughout our lives.** Just knowing that God loves us, is in us, and is for us not against us changes everything. Added to that we have the honor of hearing from God about specific problems that we face. Yet, many believers are not sure how to tap into this information.

1. *“Today God speaks to believers through His Son directly. We don’t need a prophet or an angel to bring a message to us from God. Each of us has individual communication with the very God who created the universe.”*

**Discuss:** The author compares the way Christians flock to so-called prophets or seek angelic visions in order to hear from God as “idolatry”. Why is it so important to recognize the difference between how God spoke before Christ died and rose again to how He speaks to us now?

1. **Under the Old Covenant, God guided His people by the law. Now, he leads us by His by His Spirit.** We aren’t commanded to led by the Spirit, we ARE led by the Spirit. We don’t need to “try” to be led by the Spirit; we can have faith that we are.

**Discuss:** What difference does it make when facing an overwhelming situation to know that God is leading us by His Spirit instead of us “trying” to be led by the Spirit? What is the difference between being driven/guided by law and being led by the Spirit? Can you give an example?

1. **Many Christians can read Psalm 23 and be comforted by knowing that Jesus is their Shepherd, but at the same time have in their minds that God is also a sheepdog nipping at their heels. Discuss** the mental and spiritual confusion this can cause. How might the two opposing views of God as a Shepherd or Sheepdog interfere with us discovering specific good news to help us in our difficulties?
2. **If you have been studying the gospel of grace, you have learned that we are taught right from wrong by His grace and not by the law.** In the context of Titus 2, it is speaking of forsaking ungodliness and living godly in this life.

**Discuss:** Sometimes God corrects us by His grace. How might He use His gracious instruction to help us to begin to experience success in what is so frustrating for us? (Consider the example of what God spoke to Cathy about her marriage.)

1. **The author gives two examples, one personal, and one of a friend who faced a similar devastating situation.** They both needed grace to deal with the pain of being wounded by Christian friends, and they both sought out His grace to help them in their time of need. God spoke to each of them in completely different ways. So it is for us all. Sometimes our experience is not evident to us in the pages of Scripture, and yet we know from Scripture that God’s grace is sufficient for us during suffering.

**Discuss:** If you’d like, share a difficult time when perhaps you thought you couldn’t go on another minute or day, but when you reached out to God, he imparted grace in your time of need. You don’t have to share specific personal information.

1. **Sometimes our circumstances are way too personal to share or we share and end up more frustrated.** We can rest knowing that we have an anointing that will teach us all things. Of course, it will not contradict the written word of God, but He will teach us what we need to know. Discuss.
2. **The written word of God has much to teach us.** God does speak to us as we read it. Sometimes we get busy, but the minute we pick it up and read, we are blessed. When needing specific help in our overwhelming situations, we can run into His word and be blessed and strengthened for our journey.

**Discuss:** Why is it important to read a good translation of the Bible verses only reading a paraphrase?

1. **Being able to receive wisdom from God when we lack it is one of the more encouraging graces we possess.**

**Discuss:** The author gives two examples of how God gave her wisdom and knowledge when she asked, both of them leading her to being healed physically. Have you ever had an experience in which God showed you something you could do or should stop doing that brought a solution to what seemed to an impossible situation?

**Discuss**

How can the information in this chapter help us receive specific good news about our situation? How might hearing this specific good news positively affect what we are facing? How can we take steps of faith after it has come to us through hearing God speak to us?

**Lesson Eight: Days 11 and 12**

Day 11 Faith Pitfalls

**Discuss each pitfall. Points to consider might include:**

* Have you fallen into any of these traps?
* How does real faith come about?
* Why is it important to avoid these pitfalls?

1. **Presuming Deity**
2. **My Way or No Way**
3. **Allowing Experience to Undermine Scripture**
4. **Going at Things Backward**
5. **Trusting in Your Works**
6. **Faith without Works**
7. **Foolishness**
8. **Giving Up**

Day 12 Good Girl, Bad Girl

1. **Discuss the difference between “I, I, I” thinking and “He, He, He” thinking.**
2. **Talk about the significance of this quote:** “Anyone who seeks to be justified by law will fall from His grace. It is automatic. God loves us too much to allow us to feel comfortable continuing down the dead road of self-effort.” How does “I, I, I” thinking reflect the law?
3. **Often when we are successful in many areas of life, but are still struggling with one or two, it is because in those particular areas, we are buried in layers of law that are keeping us from the freedom we desire (and often don’t know it).** As we are seeking God to help us, He will show us where law is lurking and how it is holding us down. If you’d like, share a law that the Lord pointed out to you.
4. **Having you ever caught yourself playing “Good Girl/Boy, Bad Girl/Boy”?** Or worse do you only think in terms of Bad Boy/Girl (constantly criticizing yourself)?

**Lesson Nine: Days 13-15**

Day 13 Supernatural Solution

1. **Impossible situations require supernatural solutions.**
2. **New faith comes from hearing good news, the good news we already know, and what we still need to hear.**
3. **As we receive wisdom from God about what we can do, discover what it is we might be believing or doing that is incorrect, and begin to walk in the truth He gives us, we will begin to see progress.**
4. **If someone else is involved in our overwhelming situation, it might take longer to see the results we desire. This section of the book will give you information on how to walk through the storms of life.**
5. **Faith is crucial, so it is important to understand it.**

**Discuss: In what ways can saying “faith IN GOD” rather than simply “faith” help us?**

**How would you define the word “supernatural”?**

Day 14 Supernatural Faith

1. **We all have natural faith, but when facing what seems to be impossible, we need supernatural faith. As we’ve said in previous chapters, faith comes when we hear of His grace—the good news of who He is, what He has done, and what He has promised.**
2. **Faith can’t be seen, but it is something we HAVE. It is as real as any reality. For example, most of us have not seen Jesus, yet we believe, and no one could convince us otherwise. He is as real to us as anything we can see with our eyes.**
3. **In this chapter we have an example of natural faith not in action. Here are some of the reasons faith is not working. Of course, there are spiritual comparisons.**

**Discuss** how these reasons for not having faith (not believing) in the natural might present themselves in the supernatural.

* We don’t ***know*** we have air conditioning.
* We don’t ***believe*** we have air conditioning
* We might be ***afraid*** to try turning it because we might make a fool of ourselves if it doesn’t work.
* This one seems wacky in the natural, but is common in the spiritual application. We think if the electric company ***wants*** us to have AC, ***they*** will turn it on for us.
* We have a friend who tried turning on his AC, but it didn’t work. We might think it’s a ***hoax*** or it would be ***unfair*** if ours “worked” and our friend’s didn’t.
* Have you ever witnessed any of these in your own experience when believing for a miracle?

Day 15 The Gift and Fruit of Faith

1. **In Galatians 5:22-23, the word translated “faithfulness” in some versions is actually the word “faith”. This means that faith is a *fruit* of the Spirit. How can this bring rest in difficult times?**
2. **Faith is also a *gift* of the Spirit. Discuss the two-way street of the gift of faith and how it operates?**
3. **Identify the four ways given in the last paragraph that supernatural faith can operate in our lives.**

**Lesson Ten: Days 16 and 17**

Day 16 Joyful Anticipation

**Discussion Points**

1. **Have you ever caught yourself saying, “Well, I hope so,” when in actuality you meant you sincerely doubted it?** Discuss why it is important to understand the true meaning of the word “hope”. Why does the definition of hope include joy? What is the correlation between hope and waiting? What factor does time have to do with hope? What does God’s love have to do with hope?
2. **One of the strongest Bible illustrations of faith and hope is in the life of Abraham.** Using Romans 4:16-22, discuss how faith and hope were at work in his life. How might these principles positively affect the way we/you approach the promises of God? How can understanding these help us when we face situations that are far beyond our ability to fix them?
3. **Is there something that stands out to you in this quote? How might it be applicable to your current overwhelming circumstance?**

*Allow your heart to once again believe that God loves you and that His intentions toward you are good. Allow yourself to hope in Him and His promises again—to joyfully anticipate and wait for His promises to be realized. I’m not suggesting you just jump out of your chair and shout yourself into believing. I’m not saying, “Get over it!” or “Chin up!” in the face of grief. On the contrary, simply open your heart to God who loves you, who only desires good for you, and who will do all that He has promised. Just allow your heart to hope in Him.*

1. **Isaiah 40:29-31 is a well-known passage.** How can knowing that “waiting” means to “expect” (to hope—to joyfully anticipate) positively influence our concept of what these verses mean? Why might this type of waiting renew our strength, cause us to soar like an eagle, run and not be weary, and walk and not faint?

Day 17 Pleasing God

1. **Perhaps you also experienced starting your Christian life with a desire to please God—being motivated in every area by your love for Him.** Then over time, those actions motivated by grace through faith became ***obligations***. Did/does your Christian experience include a long list of things that you believe you must do in order to be a “good” or “spiritual” or “sincere” Christian? In other words, are there religious practices you feel you must DO to be “right with God” or “to please Him”?
2. **In what ways does the false idea that God has our every word, thought, and deed under a magnifying glass negatively affect our relationship with Him?** Why is the concept of “enough” never realized with this way of “living”? If this is difficult for you to ponder, consider a human relationship in which one person is constantly scrutinizing the other, criticizing, demanding more and more, and never satisfied. Why is it difficult for love to flourish in this setting?
3. **All Christians supernaturally want to please God.** Discuss the grand implications of thinking that pleasing God amounts to not “sinning” and doing “good” INSTEAD of simply believing in Jesus (see John 6:26-29). Why does or in what ways does this truth disturb some and set free others? Why might pastors find this disturbing, and why should they instead find it wonderful? (In what ways might having a congregation of people motivated by pleasing God by faith and love be different from a congregation of people fulfilling duties in order to please God?)
4. **In Hebrews 11, we read of the many mighty deeds that people of God have done throughout history.** Often we focus on the deeds accomplished, and miss the point of Hebrews 11 that their faith is what pleased God and caused them to take action. How might this subtly sneak into our relationship and service for God?
5. **In the book of Hebrews, the author is encouraging them to believe in Jesus and not return to the law.** Paul, in Galatians, encouraged the Gentiles not to turn to the law for righteousness, but to continue in faith. Each of us has a slightly different Christian experience, so how do these exhortations to continue living under grace through faith encourage you personally not to base your righteousness (right and favorable relationship with God) on what you do and don’t do?
6. **Hebrews 11:6 teaches us that without faith we cannot please God (at all-Wuest).** This means the faith is what pleases God. Focusing on the word “pleases”, how do you think God responds when He see us believing in Him for answers during difficult times?
7. **Explain the difference between “living by grace through faith”, and “living by law through works”.**
8. **Paul explained that he had formerly seen himself as righteous based on his diligent adherence to the law, his birthright as a Hebrew, his religious participation as a Pharisee, and his religious zeal demonstrated by persecution the church.** Have you observed a similar “righteousness” in the church or perhaps have you also seen yourself as righteous by similar points of boasting?
9. **Many have taught that the “loss” Paul suffered IN ORDER TO GAIN CHRIST was giving up sin and worldly possessions.** What did he ***actually*** give up and count as rubbish? How did he obtain the righteousness which is from God?
10. **Some significantly mean, nasty, and violent things have been done by religious people against believers in Christ.** We can see it taking place around the world even today. We also see persecution within the Christian church. Paul felt completely righteous about persecuting the church. Have you observed or perhaps participated in persecuting those who teach ***righteousness by faith*** in Jesus?
11. **In Hebrews 11:6, we see that faith involves two main features.** One, we believe that God exists. We can amplify this to include that we believe that God is who He claims Himself to be (good, love, faithful, etc.). The other aspect of faith is routinely neglected or greatly diminished, and that we must believe that God rewards those who seek Him. (Save discussing the word “diligently for the next chapter.) How can understanding that faith is not only believing that God exists but also believing that He will actually ANSWER our prayers (reward us with a result) completely changes our concept of why we pray?
12. **In what ways can you relate to the song shared in this chapter?**
13. **Discuss some of the statements made in the last two paragraphs in this chapter.**

* A reward is a *good* thing.
* Believing this pleases Him.
* God isn’t concerned about how long we pray.
* God doesn’t answer our prayers based on how well we’ve been practicing our list of spiritual disciplines.
* His grace is not accumulated.
* God doesn’t refuse to answer our prayers because we aren’t perfect in every way.
* “He who approaches God has, through faith, the assurance that his seeking God will result in good to himself.”-Vincent
* We pray because He answers.
* When we face impossible situations, how much more we need to believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him with good.

1. **In what ways does Romans 4:1-5 express these same concepts?**

Day 18 “Diligently” Seeking Him

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Before you read this chapter, what was/is your conception of what it means to “diligently” seek God?**
2. **In what sense does a Christian not need to “seek” God?**
3. **The word “diligently” is not in the original Greek.** Older translations of this verse use only the word “seek”. How/why might it have been that modern translators added the adverb “diligently” (positive or negative reasons)? What does the word “seek” actually mean in the Greek? How does this proposed translation better represent the original intent of Hebrews 11:6?

*God is pleased by those who believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him out expecting to be rewarded.*

1. **It is important to always keep in mind when we pray that God delights in answering our requests.** He WANTS us to ask. He WANTS us to believe He will reward us. He WILL reward us. Discuss these examples of what it means to “seek” God both in the original sense of each passage and also how we might apply these aspects of faith into any situation, but especially into those overwhelming ones.

* Seeking God means to pray and not faint (Lk. 18:1-8).
* Seeking God means to keep asking, seeking, and knocking (Lk. 11:5-10).
* Seeking God means to believe and not doubt (Mk. 11:23, Jas. 1:5-8).
* Seeking God means praying according to His will (1 Jn. 5:14-15).
* Seeking God means to live in thanksgiving after we have asked (Col. 4:2, Phil. 4:6-7).
* Great faith means seeking God until He answers (Mt. 15:21-28, Rm. 10:11).

1. **Is there a sentence or paragraph in this chapter that stands out to you? Explain why.**

Day 19 Confidence and Peace

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Describe the type of “confidence” we have when we ask according to His will.**
2. **Besides knowing what God’s specific will is, what two things are necessary to have such confidence? How does the illustration about abused children spiritual and naturally explain our confidence or lack thereof?**
3. **How does not know God’s will make us insecure when we pray?**
4. **Discuss the five steps of faith given in Phil. 4:6-7 that we need to take to obtain the “peace that passes understanding”?**
5. **What common excuses might someone use to not follow this guidance? What are some possible consequences for not receiving and acting upon these admonitions?**
6. **Share briefly, if you’d like, you experience in applying Philippians 4:6-7. Can you describe this peace that hyper-passes understanding?**
7. **In what ways does this peace guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus?**
8. **How is it that our lives overall are positively changed by taking these steps of faith?**
9. **How might have this surpassing peace be a blessing to those closest to us?**

Day 20 Living above the Fray

1. **Describe the “double life” we as Christians experience.**
2. **What are the negative consequences of only focusing on the plane of “sight”—our senses?**
3. **In what ways can living by faith (above the fray) make a supernatural difference in dealing with these situations?**

* **Unwanted circumstances**
* **Difficult/frustrating relationships**
* **Mood swings caused by hormones or health issues (in ourselves or others)**
* **Unexpected changes**
* **Tiredness**
* **Loss**
* **Other people’s drama that affects us**

1. **In difficult relationships, how can at least one of the persons involved make a difference if he/she is walking by faith and not by sight (above the fray)? How does that dynamic change when are persons concerned are walking by faith?**
2. **Does the final poem or Psalm speak to you personally in some way?**
3. **How might using these means help us to remember God’s faithfulness?**

* **Examples in Scripture of those who believed God in the face of adversity**
* **Miracles we have experienced in the past**
* **A specific word or calling from God**

1. **Visualizing doesn’t make things happen, but how might visualizing what we are believing God will do encourage our faith in God’s grace?**
2. **Think of other examples of walking by faith and not by sight? For example:**

* **I walk by faith in God’s goodness, and not by the bad I am experiencing.**
* **I walk by faith in…**

Day 21 While We Wait

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Other than what *we* can control, why do some miracles take longer to realize?**
2. **While we wait, God will work in our hearts so that we can have victory. Discuss these ways God works in our hearts to bring us to greater freedom (spoken of in this chapter). How do these transform us and bring about the miracles we need?**

* **Receive God’s discipline/correction.**
* **Believe that Jesus is your wisdom.**
* **Believe that God will give you wisdom when you ask.**
* **Respond to His Spirit leading you.**
* **Walk in worship.**

1. **At the end of the chapter is a song written at a peaceful moment during the midst of storms. Sometimes, when we are going through hard times, we will have a day or a moment when we sense God’s peace. We have a tendency not to enjoy these times because we know the storm is not over. How might these moments of peace equip us to keep believing?**

Day 22 Sudden and Great storms

**Discussion Questions**

1. **The nature of sudden and great storms is that they take us by surprise and seem overwhelming. Share, if you’d like, about such a storm in your life.**
2. **Explain why Jesus’ question in Matthew 8:26 was not harsh, but rather reasonable. Why is it, do you think, that we tend to forget the miracles we’ve received in the past when new storms suddenly arise?**
3. **“Will we freak out and ask God why He is asleep when we need Him most or will we instead express our trust in Him?” How might our whole situation be different if we would simply remember and believe instead of forget and fear?**
4. **“It’s ok to *feel,* but don’t fear.” Have you had a sudden and great storm in which your feelings seemingly took over due to the perceived stress? Is this any area where you’d like to see improvement? Or have you noticed a change in how your respond to threatening situations?**
5. **Instead of going into panic mode, how can we pray when storm clouds rise? What good news can we preach to ourselves to boost our faith in God to help us?**
6. **Share your response to this quote:**

*Yet even if the storm continues, we can rest in His great love for us. It is like the cartoon I saw of my husband; we ride the waves of the storm instead of being pulled under by them. When we do this, He is pleased. He is proud of us as His child simply because we trust in Him. He isn’t expecting us not to feel or to “be brave” or not to respond when more wind and waves arise. Rather He will be there for us when they do, and each time we choose faith over fear, we put a smile on His glorious face because our faith pleases Him.*

1. **In what ways can you “relate” to the story about Baby Joey?**
2. **If you’d like, personalize the passages at the end of this chapter. “God, you are MY refuge and strength…”**

Day 23 Walking on Water

**Discussion Questions**

1. **How can “walking on water to Jesus” instead of freaking out “in prayer” help us to more clearly hear God speaking and guiding us?**
2. **How/why is it that focusing on the storm leads to fear instead of faith? How does fear “paralyze” us from moving forward?**
3. **Briefly record or share a situation in which you began to walk on water witnessing the miracles of God, but then began to focus on the situation/problem instead of Jesus, and then regained your focus on Him (or didn’t).**
4. **Looking to Jesus during a storm is just as “easy” as focusing on the storm, but brings about much better results. We have a choice to have faith or fold. Discuss.**
5. **The song at the end of the chapter had something to do with someone whom the author completely loved rejecting her which she found overwhelming. The song helped her keep her focus on Jesus. Have you ever experienced a rejection by someone who should have loved you but didn’t? How might the concept of walking on water to Jesus instead of focusing on the wind that blows and the waves that toss help us to navigate these sorts of “relationships”?**

Day 24 Speaking to Mountains

**Discussion Questions**

1. **The nature of sudden and great storms is that they take us by surprise and seem overwhelming. Share, if you’d like, about such a storm in your life.**
2. **Sometimes, when it “seems” as if God is not answering our prayers, there exists a natural solution to our situations that God will miraculous reveal to us when we ask. Have you ever experienced this type of miracle? Might a situation you are struggling with have a possible logical cause that could be discovered?**
3. **Often, when we are asking God for a miracle, the answer is already available if we will only speak to the problem to be removed as illustrated in Cathy’s story about her “regular” headaches. Have you ever seen mountains removed by speaking to them? Or might it be that you could ask God to give you the faith to speak to a mountain in your life?**
4. **Discuss the last two paragraphs of this chapter.**
5. **The song at the end of this chapter emphasizes the words “whatsoever” and “whosoever”. How does this promise in Mark 11:22-24 feed our faith?**

Day 25 The Trying of Our Faith

**Discussion Questions**

1. **The author writes, “God is NOT sending evil to work good in our lives.” In light of this amazing truth, discuss what the author reveals about these three commonly misunderstood verses.**

* **James 1:2-3**
* **Romans 5:1-4**
* **Romans 8:28**

1. **How can understanding that God, rather than sending trials is actually at work to turn our hard times for our good, produce faith for miracles in our lives?**
2. **According to 1 John 5:4-5, what causes us to be overcomers? Why is it important that our faith be in Jesus?**

Day 26 A Defeated Foe

**Discussion Questions**

1. **This chapter emphasizes the proper perspective of Satan as to his limited authority. Discuss how knowing that Satan is not the evil equivalent of God will change our perspectives and causes our faith to grow in each of these areas.**

* **Only God is omnipotent.**
* **Only God is omnipresent.**
* **Only God is omniscient.**

1. **Using the Scriptures quoted in this chapter and the quote at the end of it, what happened to Satan’s power and authority on the cross? In what ways does this free us from fear?**

Day 27 Resist Him

**Discussion Questions**

1. **This chapter discusses our responsibility to “resist Satan”, but what does that mean? Both of these statements are FALSE, but yet are commonly held beliefs in the church today. Have you ever or do you currently hold one of these beliefs. What is a more proper perspective?**

* **Christians need to beware of Satan because he is so very powerful.**
* **Satan is of no concern to us as believers today.**

1. **Discuss these tactics of the enemy discussed in this chapter.**

* **Questioning (bringing into doubt) God’s character**
* **Questioning God’s directives**
* **Questioning God’s provisions and promises**
* **Accusations (against God, you, and others)**
* **Resist him, steadfast ones! (Discuss the immense difference in meaning between, “Resist him steadfastly in the faith,” and what the text actually says, “Resist him, steadfast ones, in the faith.”**
* **Intimidation by false prophets**

Day 28 The Weapons of Our Warfare

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Our warfare is not against people. According to 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, what exactly is it that we are to fight?**
2. **The author discusses her former confusion about the “armor of God”. How might understanding that our armor is based on what *Jesus* accomplished instead of thinking that it has more to do with *our* own determination, positively influence how we live our lives?**

1. Lessons are suggested based on what goes together well and how much can be covered in a group study at one meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Even true Christians can fall into this trap. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This could be the normal process of sin falling away after salvation or sin that began after someone already was a Christian. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)