

USING WHAT'S BROKEN TO

Boldly Shine

FACILITATOR
GUIDE

BY BARBARA LOWNSBURY

DF The Dented Fender Ministry

Name _____

Welcome! Can I say upfront how much I appreciate you for being a host? I do! You are the heart of this experience, the person who helps others walk through their tunnels of challenge each and every week. For some, this may be the first time they have ever addressed their struggles on a spiritual level. These people are taking a brave step in their healing journey, and you play an important role in helping them get the most from this program. By facilitating meaningful discussions and helping your group stay on track, you give each person the best conditions possible to work towards change.

You are not on your own. While you are busy supporting your participants as Boldly Shine progresses, we're here to support you! Throughout this guide, you will find great discussion questions, tips and practical steps for you to help each person have a successful, meaningful experience. Including you!

What You Need to Know: This program is proven effective in its current format. Become familiar with this leader guide and the Host Hub before you begin and follow it carefully. Please do not deviate. This ensures each participant has the same experience as they go through the program, and it will equip you to lead your group effectively.

Format: The Leader Guide contains the same workbook each participant receives PLUS all the additional tools and resources you need to successfully host the class. *Additional information specifically for you will be green and italicized within the workbook portion of the guide just like this.* You will also have additional pages that aren't included in the Participant Workbook. The Facilitator Guide page numbers will always be in the corners of the pages. **Participant Workbook pages will be listed on the inside corner of the page and outlined in black. Here is an example:**

Workbook Page 19

That way, you will know what page your participants are on and can direct them accordingly since it will be different from yours.

Host Hub: Be sure to go onto The Dented Fender Host Hub (HH). This is an important tool for you as a leader, one that you will find useful throughout our 9-week program and the optional 10th week on intentional parenting.

NOTE: The Host Hub is password protected and should only be accessed by people who have purchased the Boldly Shine Host/Leader Pack.

To access the Host Hub, go to <http://www.thedentedfender.com/leader-hub> and sign in using the password you were given upon purchase. Consider bookmarking this page on your device for easier access during meetings. While you will have lifetime access to this resource and it can be used for subsequent groups, the material is copyrighted. Be sure to follow the usage agreement.

Key Host Hub Features include:

- **Online Media Kit** – Provides several resources to help you promote your Boldly Shine group, including video, social media and print. Simply copy and paste images and content as needed.
- **Online Training** – Discover training videos, PDF files and other meaningful links, plus tools and resources. Get equipped with best practices for facilitating a meaningful discussion group.
- **Lesson Connections** – Access additional content that augments each week's lesson, including blogs, special touches, activities and print materials. It's an easy way to encourage your participants between meetings.
- **Community** – Be sure to join the private Host Hub Facebook group by clicking on the access link. Once onboard, you will be able to connect with other people who lead classes, post any questions you may have, and share/gain insight from others across the country.
- **Templates** – Everything you might need to run your class is here. From welcome templates, ground rules, and sample emails to a confidentiality agreement and surveys, we've got you covered! These time saving tools allow you to focus on what matters most—the people in your group.
- **Course Content Videos** – Easily access class links in one convenient spot, making hosting a breeze.

Ongoing Resources: The Dented Fender ministry is a great ongoing resource for the people in your group. Subscribe to our blog for a weekly cup of encouragement that ties into the Boldly Shine content. Go to <http://www.thedentedfender.com/blog> to subscribe. The DFM website has other free resources to check out, too. All are meant to encourage people on their journey toward growth and transformation.

We also offer the Toolbox, a collection of teachings that circle back through each of the principles taught in the Boldly Shine course along with other relevant topics. This is a great way to stay connected to your group after the class is over. Access the Toolbox sessions for some great ongoing discussions and activities tied to the content you've learned together. See Toolbox Resources in the Host Hub for more ideas on how to effectively utilize this resource.

Next Steps: Now it's time to jump in and get your class organized. Whether you're hosting Boldly Shine online or in person, we've got you covered. Read through the notes below for best practices on hosting a transformational group experience.

"BOLDLY SHINE" BEST PRACTICES

Meeting in person is definitely the best option to use if you have the choice. In today's busy world, though, online is sometimes the only workable option. We'll briefly walk through the format of both In-Person and Online groups.

First, your participants will need to purchase their own downloadable workbook on our website at <http://www.thedentedfender.com/participant-pack/>. They can also purchase a hard copy if they prefer.

Then each week, the Leader Guide will have specific direction for you to follow. The general class format for every class will start with welcoming your group and having an opening Life Check question to discuss. Next, you will watch the digital content together in segments, stopping for discussion after each segment so the content can be absorbed in manageable chunks. Class ends with a 1-minute takeaway followed with a closing Life Check question. Attendees are given a weekly challenge or challenges that allow them to apply what they have learned. **Plan on two hours to accomplish all of this.**

With that in mind, here are some additional tips to help your group run smoothly and shine:

1. **Pray over your group.** This is the most important preparation time you will spend. Each week, ask the Holy Spirit to be moving and working throughout your discussions. Seek guidance and direction from the Lord, asking for words, wisdom, and insight as you lead. Remember your participants names and experiences. Really listen to what each one shares in group and spend time praying over them throughout the week.
2. **Be welcoming.** As a group leader and host, you are the key person the participants in your group will get to know. Do your best to be approachable, making sure each person feels welcomed every week. Allow God to shine through you!
3. **Follow the ground rules.** Powerful things happen when people talk and get vulnerable. To keep these discussions effective, always remember to follow the ground rules, found in the Host Hub. People need to know they are in a safe environment where confidentiality is respected, and everyone has a chance to share. Remember, it's not your job to fix anyone, nor should you let others in your group try to fix, either. Listen, encourage, and help people find their own answers.
4. **Give people time to think.** Take a healthy pause after tossing a question out there, even if it feels a bit awkward. It's easy to want to jump in and fill the silence yourself, but remember, people need a moment to process. If the quiet stretches on too long, maybe try rephrasing the question or sharing your own thoughts to get things going. Keep an eye on any participants who might be holding back; consider directing a question specifically to them. But don't pressure anyone who seems hesitant to speak up. Some participants just need a little extra time to get into the swing of things. And remember, just because someone's not saying much doesn't mean they're not engaged or making progress.
5. **Keep the conversation on track.** Some people love to talk. Some people hate it. You will naturally have those who will dominate a discussion and those who will happily shrink into the woodwork. Politely but firmly keep your more extroverted folks on track and on topic, not allowing them to use up all the time. Encourage and invite your more introverted folks to join the discussion now and then by directly asking them a question. It will stretch them and help them to grow (I know—I'm one of them!). Keep a balanced conversation going. People will appreciate you for it.
6. **Watch your time.** Start and end when you say you are going to out of respect for others. Even if everyone says they want to stay longer, they will thank you for helping them stay on track—promise! Wearing a watch or using a timer will help you have a sense of pace. Each guide has a time frame you will work within. If you are cues for the groups about a minute before moving on to the next section.

7. **Send reminders.** Help your group be successful by reaching out to them each week via email, text or call to remind them of any assignments they should be working on. The Host Hub has templates you can use for this, so you can hit the easy button and send pre-populated emails each week if you prefer.
8. **Go over each week's guide thoroughly.** Do this at least a day or so before your group meets. This will allow you to do any preparation necessary and be confidently ready.
9. **Remember: We are here for you.** If you're unsure of what to do or how to handle a person or a situation in your group, don't wing it. Ask us! We are always happy to help, and it's okay to tell someone you'll get back with them later.

In-Person Only:

10. **Special touches help.** Snacks and drinks aren't necessary, but they sure are nice! Most of your attendees are heading into or coming from a busy day. Light bites help, or simply allow people to bring their dinner or snacks with them. It's a nice touch that goes a long way. Consider bringing extra supplies with you each week in case someone forgets, like pens, pencils, and extra paper.

Large Groups of 10+:

The key to large group success is to make it feel as small and intimate as possible. Once you reach double- or triple-digit registration, the ability to have rich conversation gets lost. The solution? Break it down! Divide your attendees into smaller groups of 5-7 people. Arrange for them to sit with their groups in a circle or at a table.

You can assign folks to facilitate the discussion at each table, or simply provide the discussion questions for each group and let people talk. Either way, always go over the ground rules at the beginning of each class session to keep conversation going in the right direction.

Put one person in charge of streaming the content for your class, making that his or her only role. That way, technical challenges can be avoided, and your class will run smoothly.

Along those lines, have another person serve as the main facilitator of the class to serve as both a resource and to jump in and help if need be. He or she will welcome the group, take care of any announcements, help keep the class running in a timely manner, and conclude the class at the end.

Here are some additional ideas and suggestions for large groups:

11. In a large class with multiple small group leaders, we recommend a short pre-meeting before each class. This allows you to briefly review the material for the evening with other leaders, give out any needed supplies, ask or answer questions, and pray for the class. Set a firm time and location where the meeting is. Your job is to make sure you show up on time and you're ready to go. Not using group leaders? No meeting necessary.
12. As a class facilitator or a group leader, you will become the go-to person for the class or your group. Be prepared to step in and help when needed.

13. Have each individual group make name plates together on your first night if you are not going to have name tags. Have a sign-in sheet for each small group so you can keep track of attendance and follow-up with folks who missed. Bring additional pens, pencils and notebook paper in case someone forgets theirs. Use a small bin or basket you already have to keep track of these supplies so you can collect them each week (thus ensuring they are not lost for the next class!).
14. There's some practical stuff that goes with being a Group Leader. Little touches like making sure you have the proper supplies for your group each week, everyone displays name cards or tags each time, and everyone utilizes the check-in sheet each week go a long way. See the Host Hub to find templates and copies of these items. Little things make a big difference, so be on top of them.

LARGE GROUP WEEKLY CHECK LIST:

- ✓ CLASS REMINDERS SENT
- ✓ PRAYED UP, PREPARED & READY TO GIVE
- ✓ BRIEF PRE-MEETING
- ✓ SUPPLIES COMPLETE & IN PLACE
- ✓ SUPPLIES RETURNED AFTER CLASS

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR HOSTING "BOLDLY SHINE" ONLINE

Online groups allow the greatest flexibility for most folks, but also offer their own unique challenges. We're given you best practices based on our own experiences of running meaningful, relevant online discussion groups that facilitate life transformation. Let's jump in!

First off, here's how the online version works. Each week, your group will come together virtually on a set day and time you choose for two hours.

During the meeting, your job is to facilitate discussion in a safe environment using the discussion questions provided in the Leader Guide. As much as we can and do learn independently, this discussion component is critical. It gives each of us much-needed accountability and space to process all that we are learning. Not to mention all of the insight and wisdom we gain from hearing others' experiences! Discussion is the most important part of the class, so treat it as such.

To host an online discussion, you will need a Zoom account or an equivalent app, and your attendees will need a personal device they can use and access, such as a computer, laptop, tablet or phone. Setting up an online Zoom or Google Meet account is easy. Once you're in the app, set up a recurring meeting for each of the 9 weeks with an optional 10th week if you plan to go through the section for parents.

Send participants your meeting link as they register so they have it (see email templates in the Resource section or within the Leader Hub). Plug the meeting link into the email templates or within your own email each week so no one has to go searching for it. Again, the easier the experience, the more likely everyone will come back.

1. **Prior to your first meeting together, check in with each participant to make sure they have purchased the participant pack and downloaded the workbook.** Do they have a reliable internet connection to meet for the discussion group? Have they checked to make sure it works? This step alone will save you so much time that first meeting! And in a pinch, remember there are plenty of locations with free Wi-fi your members can use, such as the local public library or coffee shop.
2. **Encourage participants to use a device with a larger screen if possible.** There's something about seeing people in a larger format that feels more engaging.
3. **Access each week's video through the Host Hub.** You will stream the video on your device and share your screen with attendees through your app (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.).
4. **Each week, the Leader Guide will have specific direction for you to follow.** Follow the general format starting with welcoming people and having an opening Life Check question. You are the key to helping your group connect. Do your best to make each person feel welcomed as they join in.
5. **The technical side of online groups is up to the group leader.** If someone's internet isn't working or they don't know how to use a Zoom link, for example, there's not much we can do to help. So, if you have a love-hate relationship with technology and are not confident with skills such as email and running a discussion group app like Zoom or Google Meet, you are better off to utilize the in-person option, or to sign up your group with one of The Dented Fender online groups and let us facilitate for you. If there is a problem with any of the content, however, please reach out so we can fix it on our end.
6. **Lastly, consider gathering addresses for each attendee.** This will allow you to send a personal note at some point within the class series. It's a little touch that goes a long way with people!

Online Groups of 10+: The key to large group success is to make it feel as small and intimate as possible. Once you reach double- or triple-digit registration, the ability to have rich conversation gets lost. The solution? Break it down! Divide your attendees into smaller groups of 5-7 people. Arrange breakout rooms within the app that each group will consistently go to.

You can assign folks to facilitate discussion within each breakout room, or simply post the discussion questions as a slide prior and let people talk. Either way, always go over the ground rules at the beginning of each class session to keep conversation going in the right direction.

If possible, leave one person free to serve as the main facilitator of the class and a second person running the technological side. This person should oversee breakout rooms, answering chat questions or bringing those questions to your attention, and generally help the class run smoothly. It is very difficult to both facilitate a class and do the technical aspects simultaneously, so I highly recommend two people running a larger online class. Some additional suggestions to consider:

7. **Have the same people in the same breakout rooms each week.** This helps develop a sense of safety and belonging as well as foster vulnerability and openness within each group.

8. **As the main class facilitator, you become everyone's go-to person.** Be prepared to step in and help when needed.
9. **Track your attendance.** This will allow you to reach out to folks who missed and make sure they are okay and have everything they need. We have an attendance sheet template for you to use in the Host Hub for your convenience.

WEEKLY CHECK LIST:

- ✓ CLASS REMINDERS SENT
- ✓ PRAYED UP, PREPARED & READY TO GIVE
- ✓ READ THROUGH CONTENT AHEAD OF TIME
- ✓ WELCOME EVERYONE WARMLY

Wrap Up:

You are a rock star! You've got this! It may sound like a lot but trust me. After a few weeks, it will flow smoothly. Remember—God is using you to boldly shine in the lives of so many. Your help is invaluable. Be sure you take care of you during this season so God can use you effectively. Know that we're here for you should you need help! And remember – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

Blessings and Thanks,

Barb & the DFM Team

(Note: Beginning of Participant Workbook)

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

My dreams? Crushed. My finances? I was wrestling through bankruptcy and foreclosure. My thoughts and emotions brewed like a black, malevolent storm, whipping around in my brain and paralyzing me with fear. My back was to the wall, figuratively and literally, when I sank slowly to my knees, head in hands as I silently sobbed, and then cried out, “Lord, Why? I’m at the end of my rope here. I’ve tied a knot at the end like I was taught and I’m trying to hold on, but my fingers are slipping. I know there’s supposed to be a light at the end of every tunnel, but right now I don’t see even a pinprick. Help me, Lord! Help me hold on. *I don’t know what to do anymore.*”

Those next few months became some of the most profound and powerful of my life. God heard my prayer and began to teach me the incredible, transformative power that comes from actually letting go of the rope and allowing God to remove it altogether. No longer am I holding tightly to doubt and fear, or working to scale my way to the top. I am free, truly free. I experience mercy, grace, peace and joy almost every single day. Despite my circumstances. In spite of the challenges.

God showed up with many practical answers. I have been emotionally and financially solid for a long time now. But more importantly, He taught me how to invite Him in more deeply so He could transform my vision and my connection with Him and others, empowering me to move forward bravely and intentionally. To consistently improve my life and ultimately, to boldly shine for Him along my destined path.

God wants you to experience that same powerful transformation for yourself. It won’t look like mine, of course. Your answers, just like your situation, are unique to you. But as we embark on this journey together, I want to share a word I received from the Lord early on that will help you as you begin: ENNOIA.

Ennoia is a Greek word used twice in the New Testament, and it has to do with attitude and thought. Ennoia is about understanding what God really thinks amid our messiness and challenges; it’s learning to embrace the right mindset in those teeth-gritting spaces in order to gain freedom. It’s about finding and applying biblical principles to expose and refine the very core of who you are so you can start moving forward toward a better, richer life than you’ve ever believed you could experience. That is my goal for you in this course, the “why” behind everything you will learn and hear.

Ennoia matters. We find it first in Hebrews 4:12: “For we have the living Word of God, which is full of energy, and it pierces more sharply than a two-edged sword. It will even penetrate to the very core of our being where soul and spirit, bone and marrow meet! It interprets and reveals the true thoughts (Ennoia) and secret motives of our hearts” (TPT). That can sound slightly terrifying honestly, to have our thoughts and hearts revealed. Yet when the Apostle Paul shares this, he is talking about it in the context of finding rest, a true Sabbath-rest for the people of God. Now that does sound good! My goal is to help you find it.

The second instance of Ennoia is used by the apostle Peter when he reminds us to not be afraid, that suffering has a purpose at the cross of Christ. “Since Jesus went through everything you’re going through and more,” he shares, “learn to think (Ennoia) like him” (1 Peter 4:1, MSG). Jesus’ attitude toward us is one of compassion, grace and freedom. Our past circumstances no longer have to define us because God is bigger than our circumstances.

The good news is God will take it all—the good, the bad and the ugly. And yes, He warmly and enthusiastically takes hold of you in the midst of this process no matter where you find yourself approaching it from.

But be forewarned: this isn’t your typical Bible study. It’s going to go deep. It will be painstakingly honest and real. Yet it will also infuse you with faith and set you free. Are you ready for the challenge?

YOUR ENNOIA COMMITMENT

What does ENNOIA mean for you as you approach this course?

1. MAKE TIME

Seems obvious, right? You have to make space to do the work. Yet time and time again this is what can trip me up the fastest if I’m not intentional about it. Set time aside in your schedule and guard that time zealously. Have a plan in place of when/where/how you will watch and complete the weekly assignments.

2. COMMIT FULLY

You can’t throw a cup of water on a raging fire and expect it to make much of an impact, or put a band-aid on a gushing wound thinking it will make it better somehow. If you attempt this half-heartedly, that’s the kind of result you will get. BUT, if you commit to attend and engage, doing the work each week, I can *promise* you transformation and healing growth will become your experience. Your answers will begin to come. Why? Because God’s word never returns empty.

3. KEEP AN OPEN MIND

You are going to doubt what you’re learning sometimes. You may think you are in a tunnel for one reason only to find out it’s for another reason entirely. You’re not going to see how all of the pieces pull together right away. Persist, and watch the pieces fall into the right places as the Holy Spirit guides you forward. Grab a hold of Jesus’ reminder when He promises, “So what makes you think God won’t step in and work justice for his chosen people. Who continue to cry out for help? Won’t he stick up for them? I assure you, He will. He will not drag His feet” (Luke 18:7-8). So, hang in there! Growth is right around the corner.

MY ENNOIA COMMITMENT

How does ENNOIA apply to me as I share these principles with you? It means I commit to you a few things:

1. YOU WON'T BE OVERWHELMED WITH ASSIGNMENTS

Trust me, I get it. Life is rarely static. We've all got crazy situations and events that get thrown in from left field, including sickness, kid challenges, work challenges, and emotionally crazy days. I've crafted a course that takes all of that into account. Assignments are open-ended, which means on the weeks where life feels like a well-oiled machine and you're chugging along with space and capacity, you can take a deeper dive into the material and really dig in. But should life get hectic, you can always wade into the shallow end of the pool, pick the questions you connect with most, and still get enough to grow.

2. KEY ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED

There are a few key weeks [BRAVERY, INTENTIONALITY] where your homework will require more time. Why? It's hard to grow spiritual muscle without doing some occasional heavy lifting! You will always know when a particular week requires more focus and time on your part.

3. I WANT YOU TO SUCCEED

Do you need prayer? My team and I are here. Do you need a midweek pick-me-up? My blog is just a click away. Are you looking for more growth opportunities? We've got them. Check out our website at www.thedentedfender.com so you can grab a hold of every tool we have available in the toolbox for you to use. We're on your side!

THE BASICS

Each lecture is formatted the same way and is meant to work in conjunction with the *Boldly Shine* workbook. There are only two things to focus on: the PRINCIPLE and the APPLICATION.

PRINCIPLE

Each week you'll be given a principle to explore. Each principle is always broken down into the same format:

1. LIFE CHECK

You will always start and end with a LIFE CHECK. This is meant to give you space to reflect and respond to the content and homework. The Life Checks at the beginning should be done right before you start the next lecture. It gives you space to reflect on the previous week's challenge. At the end of each lecture there will also be a Life Check with application questions to reflect on and explore.

2. WEEKLY PRINCIPLE

As you listen you may have a thought or response you want to jot down. The workbook allows you to capture your thoughts, questions and reactions to what you are learning. Whether you doodle, draw, or take copious notes, you've got the space to do it.

After the first introductory lecture (The Tunnel), each subsequent principle will be broken down into 2-4 REFLECT & RESPOND sections so you have time to process and apply what you're learning as you go. These will be self-explanatory, but if you have any questions just ask!

And don't worry about trying to capture every scripture you hear. They will be listed in the workbook at the beginning of each principle. That way you can focus on what you're hearing versus where to find that cool scripture that just became a new favorite.

There is a SUMMARY at the end of every principle that boils everything down to key points you can walk away with. And if down the road you forget where a particular point was made, or a specific topic was discussed, the summaries are a good place to look.

3. ONE-MINUTE TAKE AWAY

Your thoughts matter. So, before we dive into deeper questions and applications we'll give you a minute to gather them. Is there something that's really jumping out at you from the lesson? Maybe a particular scripture that struck home? Or a bigger picture emerging? This is your chance to quickly capture those initial thoughts and impressions.

APPLICATION

What's the point of receiving a life-giving principle if you never learn how to apply it? That's like being given the keys to a car but never learning how to drive it. The car sure looks sweet, but you're never going to go anywhere other than where you're currently parked. I want you to boldly shine, not just sit behind the wheel of life stuck on the side of the road. Application is EVERYTHING so make the space in your schedule to do it.

For this course, your application consists of a WEEKLY CHALLENGE. This is your chance to begin stretching those spiritual muscles and helping them to grow! You will be given a task to complete and the entire week to complete it. The task won't always take a lot of time, but even if you think it's silly, do it. Dead serious here. Think of the many things in your life that didn't make sense to you at first but later on you became deeply grateful for.

God reminds us, "A slacker's way is like a thorny hedge, but the path of the upright is a highway" (Proverbs 15:19). Umm, highway sounds seriously better! I can promise you from personal experience the result is worth the risk.

I will also include three WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS each week to drive home a specific principle. They tie into what you're learning and will help you go deeper with God. I highly recommend doing them!

That's it! Principle. Application. Simple, but powerful. Remember that many a person has walked down the path you find before you only to find transformation, hope and peace on the other side. And many a person will go down this path after you, unsure and unsteady, just as you may find yourself today. In the end, the heart of ENNOIA is to realize you can be done with suffering and feeling trapped. You can find the tunnel exit and move forward. Why? Because God's attitude/ENNOIA toward you is one of love, compassion and freedom. Remember Jesus' promise to you: "My burden is easy and my yoke is light" (Matthew 11:30). He's so got you, and you so got this! Pick up those keys and let's start driving together.

Respectfully,
Barb Lownsbury

FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

1) What does ENNOIA mean to you? What will be the biggest attitude challenge you face as you begin this journey?

2) How will you need to structure your time in order to really grab a hold of the principles you are learning? What might get in your way, and how can you set yourself up for success?

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week one! By now, you should have familiarized yourself with the introduction, sent out your first reminder email and established a rhythm for how you would like each class to run. Look over the tips on pages 3-8 on how to run your group smoothly if you need a quick refresher.

Before You Start: Make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning.

What You Need to Know: “The Tunnel” is well designed for your first class. Since we know you will want plenty of time to get to know each other, to go over ground rules and to break the ice, it’s the shortest class in the series.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) yourself first so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Introduce yourself and share a little bit about who you are.
- Briefly go over any housekeeping items (announcements, bathroom location, that sort of thing).
- Starting with you, have each person share their name and one interesting fact about themselves along with what made them decide to come to this class today or what they’re hoping to get from it. Spend some time here.
- Go over both the ground rules and confidentiality agreement from the Host Hub and answer any questions.
- Ask and discuss, “What will be your biggest challenge to come to class consistently?” Brainstorm possible solutions to those challenges together.
- Answer any other questions.

Get Started: Explain that “The Tunnel” is an overview of what they can expect throughout the course, including the content and flow of each class. **Once you’re ready, start the video.**



1 | The Tunnel

There is a Way Out

SCRIPTURES

Jeremiah 29:11

Ezekiel 36:26

Matthew 18:22

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

SUMMARY

On our spiritual journey, we sometimes get stuck in some dark, challenging tunnels. Fortunately, God can take us through those tunnels in a way that makes us better for the process. He specializes in bringing light into dark places, removing from us the hurt and the bitterness, and instead replacing it with joy and peace. Remember, this course isn't designed to "fix" you. Rather, you will be given principles and practical steps that will help you move forward on your spiritual journey and toward the tunnel exit.

The class consists of 6 life-guiding principles:

1. **VISION:** Begin to believe you can heal and change because God can heal and change you!
2. **CONNECTION:** Learn to tie into God and to others who are on your side and want to help you heal.
3. **BRAVERY:** Start to push past your fear and learn from your mistakes.
4. **INTENTIONALITY:** Establish concrete, specific steps to change your situation.
5. **CONSISTENCY:** Train for the important step of developing and maintaining healthy habits.
6. **BOLDLY SHINE:** Step back and watch what God can do, marking the moments of victory and learning to refine your vision as you listen for God's ongoing direction for your life.

These principles all work together to lead you toward a transformed, renewed life.

LIFE CHECK

One Minute Take-Away:

After the One Minute Take-Away is over, stop the video and take some time to discuss everyone's response. Next, give participants 5-7 minutes to being writing in response to the questions below. Some people aren't comfortable writing; some are. Shifting from writing to discussion gives you a chance to connect with both. Go through as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability as you share your own responses. Leave 5-7 minutes at the end of class to go over this week's challenge.

NOTE: You may finish early with this first class

Write in response to today's lesson:

1. What most resonated with you from The Tunnel?
2. How would you describe the tunnel you find yourself in?
3. List something you want to receive from this class:
4. Which step sounds easiest to you? Which step seems hardest? Explain.
5. What is the biggest doubt you have about God's ability to change you?
6. What might He say to you about your doubt?

Feel free to post any additional comments or questions in our discussion thread.

Go over this week's challenge with your participants. Discuss as a group what each person will do. Give suggestions if necessary and remind people it's okay if they change their mind about what they chose to do as long as they do something! Remind them to engage with the devotionals in their workbook this week, and then dismiss.

CHALLENGE:

This week do something that emotionally fills you. It could be as simple as grabbing your favorite cup of joe and reading that magazine you love, or as adventurous as finally tackling that difficult golf course you've wanted to try or taking that long hike you've been meaning to. Whatever it is, it should be something that makes you smile from the inside out. What will you do?

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week one!

WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS:

Create space to read the following short devotionals* throughout the week to enhance your growing experience (see note below):

DEVOTIONAL #1

Spiritual Armor

Let's take a look at Ephesians 6:10-18 (NLT):

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Who does this verse tell us is the real enemy?

How would you currently describe the condition of your spiritual armor?

What is the one piece of armor you need more of in your life and why?

Prayer is a powerful weapon at your disposal. What are 2-3 things going on in your life right now that you can begin to consistently pray about?

List 1-2 new people you can begin praying for, too:

DEVOTIONAL #2

Be Still

Exodus 14:14 says, “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.” (NIV)

Is being still hard for you?

What do you think it means for you to be still in your situation?

Let’s jump back to Exodus 14:10, which says, “As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord.” Why do you think the Israelites doubted God would deliver them?

Can you relate to the fear of the Israelites? I sure can. Yet despite their doubts, God still delivered his people. How might you be able to draw hope from the Israelites' outcome?

Spend time envisioning what being still and trusting God might look like in your situation.

DEVOTIONAL #3

Choose Your Adventure

Your choice! Go through the scriptures from the Tunnel lesson. Which one most jumps out at you? Write it down here:

Next, explore how you might use that scripture in your day-to-day life here:

***Don't have a bible?** Visit <http://www.biblegateway.com> for free access. If you're not sure of what version of the Bible to read, I would recommend either the NIV, CEV or NLT versions. They are known for being easy to read and understand. Other straightforward versions are the MSG or the TLB. They are paraphrases, which means it takes the words from the Bible and tries to put it in the words you would hear in everyday life for additional clarity. Enjoy!

NOTE: Sometimes I will list a specific version of the Bible to read from as I think it speaks the loudest to what we're trying to learn. That said, you can always read each scripture in whatever version you prefer. Better yet, go to <http://www.biblegateway.com> and compare them side-by-side to enhance your understanding!

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week two! Don't forget to send out a reminder about this week's challenge to your group, and to encourage them to make it to the next class.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Vision" is a concept that will change and evolve over the course of the class, but it is the foundation for moving toward a more rewarding life journey. This week, you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

You may also have new people this week. Be sure to briefly review the ground rules with them and let them know what the weekly challenge was so they can follow the opening discussion.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Re-introduce yourself and if you have new members this week, have everyone briefly do the same.
- Briefly go over housekeeping items (announcements, bathroom location, that sort of thing), especially if you have new people.
- Starting with you, share how the weekly challenge went. What were your thoughts about doing your activity, and did you find it worthwhile?
- If you didn't do the challenge, what blocked you? What might you be able to do differently this week to accomplish the next challenge?
- Answer any questions.

Get Started: Explain that "Vision" is the first step in the Boldly Shine process and will follow the same format as the previous lesson. Once you're ready, start the video.



2 | Vision

Discover the Exit

SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 29:18

2 Corinthians 3:18

Isaiah 61:1b-3

Proverbs 14:10

2 Corinthians 1:8f

James 5:10-11a

James 1:2-4

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

What area of your life that you've lost hopeful vision for?

Why might it be important to re-establish a godly vision in this area?

John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." How does that specifically apply to you?

Do you ever feel like somehow you're a mistake, just like Michelangelo's lost souls? Or your life feels like one big mistake or challenge after the other? I sure have! Take a moment and look at this scripture again:

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. (Isaiah 61:1-3).

How might God begin to use your situation to create something good from the ashes?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

What was your reaction to hearing the idea that “God never gives us more than we can handle” is not in the Bible and, in fact, isn’t always true?

What might trusting God look like in your situation?

What lessons might God be trying to teach you through the challenge you’re facing?

How might understanding those lessons help you re-establish a God-given vision?

Part of vision is understanding that God has plans to impart something special within you from the ugliness you experience. Lessons like how to have hope despite the challenges, how to experience peace in the midst of the storm, and how to be healed from the inside out so you can engage more fully with life. What is one gift you are looking forward to receiving?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Vision is crucial. Begin to look to God and ask Him to show you His vision for you. Part of vision is understanding that what you go through has value and worth when put into God's hands. No matter what it is, He can find a way to use it for good if you let Him. Remember that God is able to give you His strength to help you get through hardship. This begins with vision. It starts by learning how to replace the negative tapes in your head with God's healing truths. As your vision for your life changes, your actions naturally follow. Since vision evolves and changes over time, be flexible and listen for God's guidance as you move forward.

LIFE CHECK

One Minute Take-Away:

After the One Minute Take-Away is over, stop the video and take some time to discuss everyone's response. Next, give participants 7-10 minutes to begin writing in response to the questions below. Then go through as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability as you share your own responses. Leave 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge.

Write in response to today's lesson:

Brain research shows that the beliefs we hold onto subconsciously actually begin to create our everyday reality. In other words, if your vision is clouded with mostly the negative, if your sight is constantly blurred with what's not working and why you and/or your situation are horrible, stupid, not good enough—whatever negative gunk you tell yourself—that's what is going to remain your reality.

With that in mind, one of the things I share in this lesson is that when your vision begins to change, your actions naturally follow. Part of how we begin to change the trajectory of our life through faith is to begin believing our lives can be different. It might feel artificial and weird for you at first, but spend some time right now envisioning what your life would look like if your challenge was healed or removed. Close your eyes and imagine it.

Now, write down or draw what a changed life would look like for you on a day-to-day basis:

The Bible talks A LOT about changing your vision and your thinking. And not just in the short term, but over your entire life. God is slowly but surely carving you into the masterpiece He created you to be by replacing your blurred, flawed vision with His perfect one for you.

Paul shares about this when he says, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and Sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3:12-14).

In order to establish or clarify your personal life vision, what are some things you might need to “leave behind” and let go of?

While your ultimate prize/vision is to be home with Jesus in heaven someday, why might having a more positive vision of what your day-to-day life could look like be helpful for you?

We will delve into these concepts more as we move forward through the course, but an important piece to understand right now is the role scripture plays in helping you to change your thinking. The more our subconscious mind hears, sees and internalizes these positive statements of truth, the more freedom you and I get to experience. Write down a few scriptures that you personally connect with here (remember—my personal favorites are at the end of this lesson for you to look at):

Go over this week's challenges with your participants. There is a little bit more to do this week, so be sure to discuss how to overcome any roadblocks your group may encounter so they will be successful in completing them. Remind participants to complete the devotionals for the week, and then dismiss.

CHALLENGE:

- Take time out in each day to ask God to give you a new vision for what your life can be.
- Spend time envisioning what your life would look like if your challenge was healed or removed and try to visualize it often.
- Pick 1-2 of the scriptures you've chosen and write them out or memorize them. Place them somewhere you will see or access often. You can write them on your bathroom mirror so you see them each morning, or put a few on your refrigerator so you see them throughout the day. Place them on index cards and carry them with you so you can pull them out when you're feeling emotionally challenged or drained. Or simply bookmark passages in your Bible and read them when you need to. Remind yourself often about God's vision of who you are.
- If you run across quotes or sayings you love which fit into your God-given vision, save, post or memorize those as well. Surround yourself with positive truths!
- Prepare to share a scripture or two next week that you personally connect with and why in the opening LIFE CHECK.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week two!

MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURES

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but below are some of the scriptures I have posted around my home and office to help me hold to my vision in no particular order. If you're not sure how to find scriptures for yourself, I've included some quick tips at the end to help you.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future." -- Jeremiah 29:11

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. -- Isaiah 41:13

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. -- Ephesians 3:12-14

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who love him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us. -- Psalm 103:11-12

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. -- Joshua 1:9

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight. -- Proverbs 3:5-6

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. -- Romans 8:35, 37-39

He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. -- Psalm 34:18

The Lord your God is with you, the mighty warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing. -- Zephaniah 3:17
And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. -- Ephesians 3:18

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: if our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. -- 1 John 3:19-20

Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to hungry. -- Psalm 146:3-7

I thank you, high God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! -- Psalm 139:14

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. -- Jeremiah 33:3

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. -- John 16:33

If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. -- 2 Timothy 2:13

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Even now it sprouts and grows and matures. Don't you perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and open up flowing streams in the desert. – Isaiah 43:18-19

NOTE: For a printable version of these scriptures, visit <http://www.thedentedfender.com/freebies>

Finding Scriptures: At the back of many bibles is something called a Concordance, which is just a fancy name for an alphabetized index of words. You can look up words like “unfailing” or “love” or “precious” and you will find scriptures containing that word. Some Bibles have a topical index, which gives you a topic like love and then lists key scriptures that teach about the topic. Both concordances and topical indexes can be bought as separate books. You can also check them out from your local library or go online to <http://www.biblestudytools.com/concordances> or <http://www.biblegateway.com/topical>. Bible Gateway also has about every version of the Bible you can think of available for you to explore for free online.

Another great way to find scriptures is to read books of the Bible that focus on the topic you want to learn about. Some Bibles will give a brief summary of the main lessons from each book right before the first chapter. Others will give you a list like this at the back of the Bible. Both of the websites above will give you lessons as well. Some great books for gaining vision are Joshua, Nehemiah, Mark, Romans, Ephesians, and 1 John. Both Psalms and Proverbs are also full of nuggets of wisdom and contain many verses about God's love and vision for you. Don't have a bible? Most churches will give you one for free. You can also order a free Bible from <http://www.biblesforamerica.org>. Happy hunting!

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL:

Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Look Ahead

Alexander Graham Bell said, "When one door closes another door opens, but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open up for us." What are you spending time looking back on regretfully?

What might Jesus say to you about it?

Find a scripture that can help you when the pain, loss or fear gets overwhelming and write it down here:

Now, read the scripture out loud and put your name within the scripture as much as you can. Do this 3-4 times. Write down or draw how this experience was for you:

DEVOTIONAL #2

You Are Not Your Circumstances

In VISION, I share that your circumstances don't have to define you. Letting go of the past doesn't mean letting go of beloved memories or even of the lessons we have learned from our challenges and experiences. What it does mean is to learn how to move forward again knowing that you are more than the sum of your experiences; you are a child of God.

Even if what you are going through is a result of your own decisions, your circumstances don't have to define you. Jesus puts it this way:

"Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Then come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you'll discover that I'm gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. For all that I require of you will be pleasant and easy to bear" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Write down or draw what that means to you here:

DEVOTIONAL #3

Peace in the Waiting

Sometimes God gives a big picture vision, one that guides you throughout your life. But most often God simply gives you the very next step. If you're like me, that can be hard! I want immediate answers and results, and I get impatient.

I want to encourage you today. The most important part of vision is understanding that it needs to be directed by God, not by you and me. Why? Because if it is directed by God, it will always work! Consider the following scriptures:

"We humans keep brainstorming options and plans, but God's purpose prevails" (Proverbs 19:21).

"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave" (Psalm 86:11, 13).

"He stooped down to lift me out of danger from the desolate pit I was in, out of the muddy mess I had fallen into. Now he's lifted me up into a firm, secure place and steadied me while I walk along his ascending path. A new song for a new day rises up in me every time I think about how he breaks through for me! Blessing after blessing comes to those who trust the Lord" (Psalm 40:2-4).

What is one way you can apply these scriptures to your life when you want to run ahead and go it your own way instead of trusting in God to work through the step He's given you?

Look at those scriptures again. What is something you are learning about God in a new way?

God's way works! We know it takes time to establish vision with God, and even then, it takes time for that vision to evolve. So spend some extra time right now asking God to give you peace in the waiting.

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week three! Don't forget to send out a reminder about this week's challenge to your group, and to encourage them to make it to the next class. Be sure to continue praying for the people in your group.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Connection" is about developing a more intimate, meaningful relationship with God and inviting him into the very center of your challenge. Once again, this week you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared. This class is a little longer than the others, so response/discussion times are adjusted accordingly.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went. Was everyone able to finish the full challenge?
- What was the hardest or easiest part to do?
- What quote, scripture or scriptures did you pick and why?
- If you posted your positive truths, where did you post them?
- If you didn't do the challenge, what blocked you? What might you be able to do differently this week to accomplish the next challenge?
- Answer any questions.

Get Started: Explain that "Connection" is in some ways the most important step in the Boldly Shine process, and the one God is most interested in. The lesson will follow the same format as the previous lesson. **Once you're ready, start the video.**



3 | Connection

Meet Your Guide

SCRIPTURES

Matthew 28:20b	Zephaniah 3:17	Romans 8:38-39	Isaiah 40:28-31
Isaiah 49:16a	Hebrews 4:13	Psalms 62:7-8	Romans 8:26
John 14:26	Matthew 7:11	2 Corinthians 11:14	Deuteronomy 18:21-22
Galatians 1:8	1 Corinthians 14:33	1 Samuel 15:22	Psalms 128:1
Proverbs 3:5-6	1 John 4:1	Judges 6:36-41	John 10:4,14,16
Ephesians 4:26-27	Romans 5:8	Ecclesiastes 7:20	Hebrews 10:30
Matthew 7:2	Psalms 73	Isaiah 55:8	Galatians 5:1
Isaiah 43	Romans 3:23	Psalms 40:2	Romans 8:28
Luke 11:23-26	Luke 12:6-7	2 Corinthians 10:5	

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 3-5 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take about 15 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

We all have defense mechanisms. These are reactions or ways of thinking or acting that may have helped you at one point, but now that behavior is actually hurting you. Do you have any defense mechanisms that you need to lay at the foot of the cross and let go of? Write or draw about that here:

Listening to God is crucial! Learning to not only listen for God's nudges but to obey them is key to growing in your ability to hear from Him more frequently. Write or draw about your ideas on how to grow that listening muscle:

Being sure what we're hearing is actually from God is important! His voice can oftentimes sound a lot like your own, but you know that idea or insight never could have come from you. There are other ways to discern God's voice. Let's revisit two of these:

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8).

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

The first scripture reminds us to compare everything we receive with the Bible. More simply, that means if you feel God is asking you to do something that is contrary to His words, it's not from Him. How can you practically use this tool as you learn to listen more closely to the Lord's voice?

God's will isn't confusing; neither is His voice. Usually when I'm confused, it's because I don't like what I'm hearing, or God's answer simply hasn't become clear yet and I'm impatient. How can you use this scripture to help you steer straight toward peace and away from confusion?

The bottom line: listening requires a step of faith. Think of one practical way you can take a faith step this week and write it down:

Remember, feeling the incredible presence of God on a day-to-day basis is one of the most incredible gifts He gives us! It feels amazing to experience God more intimately and it's worth fighting for. It truly is a game changer!

⇒ **Time To Unpause & Continue** *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 3-5 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take about 15 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

"Distorting our view of God is one of the best tactics the enemy ever invented because if we can be kept from seeing the true face of God, we miss out on healing and growth." How does this apply to your situation?

Barrier #1: Anger and Mistrust. What most stood out to you here?

Sometimes in relationships, we get caught up in our own version of Mortal Kombat – a fight to the death. We care more about winning than about protecting our hearts and minds from further damage. The more you and I engage in broken conversations and broken behavior, the longer we delay our healing and growth.

Let's look at a different translation of Ephesians 4:26-27. It says, "If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry—get over it quickly; for when you are angry, you give a mighty foothold to the devil."

It's not the anger itself that gets us into trouble. It's how we handle it. Are you nursing any grudges? How might this scripture apply to you?

Think of a moment in your life for which you are ashamed. Bring it up fully in your mind's eye. Now remember: Jesus died for you in the midst of that moment, and any other ugly moment you can think of (*Romans 5:8*). That is how much Jesus loves you! How do you feel about that? Write or draw your response here:

Jesus made a choice to love his enemy. He told His followers, "You're familiar with the old written law, 'Love your friend,' and its unwritten companion, 'Hate your enemy.' I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves."

Jesus ends with, "In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you" (Matthew 5:43-48 MSG).

What does this mean for you?

Reminding yourself often of God's loving nature toward you is a very powerful exercise. Read the following and then reflect on them in the space provided:

If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? -- Romans 8:31-32

So we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together to fit into God's perfect plan of bringing good into our lives, for we are his lovers who have been called to fulfill his designed purpose. -- Romans 8:28

Remember, there's only one person you have control over: you.

⇒ **Time To Unpause & Continue** *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 3-5 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take about 15 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section three:

#2 Guilt: How would you describe healthy vs. unhealthy guilt?

Jesus said, "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus died to make your load easier, not harder. How can the unforced rhythm of grace help you overcome guilt?

With that in mind, what are some of the negative tapes that play in your head? You know the ones—the ugly self-talk about how you don't work hard enough, you're not thin, rich or pretty enough, you're not ever going to change. It can be a seriously long list! Write down the negative statements you think about yourself most frequently here:

Now, if Jesus were standing before you right now in person, what would He say to you about your list?

Embrace that freedom only He can give! Next time that negative thought comes against you, run to your Father in heaven so He can remind you of what is true: you are valued & loved!

#3 Nothingness: Have you ever felt nothingness with God? Describe or draw what that feels like for you:

I shared several ways to begin to begin piercing through the fog and connecting with Jesus again. What resonated with you?

How can you apply that the next time you're feeling distant with Him?

Remember—you are on a journey and God is going to take you there. Scriptures that speak life back into you really matter. Spend a moment right now in the book of Psalms and see if you can find another one that you connect with. Write it down here:

Reminder: if spending time with God is new for you I have some great suggestions at the end!

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 3-5 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take about 15 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section four:

#4 Self-Reliance: How good are you at waiting? Do you tend to run ahead of God? List some of the ways you're tempted to do so here:

"Sometimes we need to step back and remember God is in control, and he will show up in ways we don't always understand, recognize or appreciate initially." How does this apply to you?

Part of how you develop your spiritual muscle is by spending time with God. What might be a way you can make Him more of a priority in your day-to-day life?

I am a “take action” sort of gal. I tend to want to get things done. Quickly. While there are many positives about that quality in my character, there are also some weaknesses. Oftentimes on the flip side of our strengths, we usually find our weaknesses. How might your need to act actually hurt you spiritually?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6). How can this scripture help you the next time you want to run ahead of God?

Broken Pieces: the healing we experience needs to be guarded. Consider 2 Timothy 4:2 which says, “Proclaim the Word of God and stand upon it no matter what! Rise to the occasion...when it’s convenient and when it’s not.” How can you apply this scripture to protecting your time with God?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Step one to connection is to realize God is there, He loves you, and He wants to have a relationship with you. The next step to connection is to surrender your masks. Acknowledge God. Share your hurt and your fears with Him. Engage with God in a real, genuine way. Don’t be afraid to be you—the good, the bad and the ugly. God will take it all.

Then, begin to listen for His voice in new and deeper ways. Authentic engagement equals connection. Be aware of the barriers that can keep you from hearing Him and ask God to start knocking them down. Remember 2 Cor. 10:5 which says, “We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ.” (MSG)

LIFE CHECK

One Minute Take-Away:

After the One Minute Take-Away is over, stop the video and take some time to discuss everyone's response. Next, give participants 5-6 minutes to begin writing in response to the questions below. Then go through as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability as you share your own responses. Leave about 5 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge.

Questions:

What is a way you're hearing from God right now about your situation?

What are you learning about yourself?

What is your biggest challenge to connecting with God? What is a possible solution?

Each of us have something we do or participate in that oftentimes brings us joy. What are yours?

Now, think of how you might include God in some of those activities as a way to connect with Him.

Go over this week's challenges with your participants. Ask if anyone will have a hard time implementing their step of faith and discuss possible ways to push through. Remind participants to complete this week's devotionals, and then dismiss.

CHALLENGE

- Go to God at least once this week in a deeper way than you have for a while. If you've never spent time alone with God before, set aside some time to do so. Go outside or to a church or to a quiet space--anywhere that helps you feel emotionally connected to God--and spend special time with Him. Be real. Get your issues out with Him. Once you've done this, write down how you felt afterwards.
- Go back to section one and look at the step of faith you wrote down. This week, implement your step of faith.

If this whole God thing is NEW to you...

Start by reading or listening to one of the first four books of the New Testament, called the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). I recommend Mark if you are more of a hands-on learner, and John if you're more of a deep thinker. Whichever you chose, all four will give you a great overview of Jesus' life, the lessons He taught, how He interacted with people, and how that applies to you. As you read, ask yourself what you're learning about Jesus and God, especially as it relates to their character and their heart for you. It's a great place to start!

There are also all sorts of devotional guides out there at bookstores and on the internet that will help you start studying through the Bible so you can understand God more clearly. I would recommend looking for one that focuses on God's enduring love for you and the type of relationship He wants to develop with you. I've noticed the sales clerks at Christian bookstores tend to be quite knowledgeable about what they have in stock, and can point you in the right direction. Public libraries will carry devotional books as well.

Not a reader? There are several apps that will read the Bible to you. You can also check out an audio Bible from your local library or buy one online.

Finally, you may want to consider finding a church to attend if you don't do so already. There is no such thing as a perfect church since by definition it's filled with imperfect people—including you and me! Yet we are wired to need people, and finding a group that not only understands your struggles but can help you along on your journey is worth the effort! Again, there are many online options for church, too. Don't be afraid to explore until you find one that's a fit for you.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week three!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Finding Your Truth

The Bible warns us, “Be careful—watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion, looking for some victim to tear apart” (1 Peter 5:8-9). If your view of God gets distorted, how does that aid the enemy?

We talked about the negative tapes that run through our head. Go back and look at some of the ones you wrote down. How do those lies relate to the scripture above?

Remember, God’s sword of truth is what we use to fight back the enemy. Find a scripture that reminds you of what is true, a verse that counters one of the lies you tell yourself. Write it down here:

Now, post that scripture somewhere conspicuous, or add it to the other index cards you may have made. Continually collect scriptures, quotes, song lyrics and poems that remind you of what’s true. When the enemy starts attacking your thoughts, take them out to read and be reminded of God’s enduring love for you.

DEVOTIONAL #2

Deliverance

Today, read Psalms [102](#) and [103](#). Write down or draw your thoughts and impressions here:

What is one practical way you can apply Psalms 102 and 103 to your day-to-day life?

DEVOTIONAL #3

A New Path

A personal favorite scripture I share is Psalm 40:1-3 which says, "I patiently waited, Lord, for you to hear my prayer. You listened and pulled me from a lonely pit full of mud and mire. You let me stand on a rock with my feet firm, and you gave me a new song, a song of praise to you. Many will see this, and they will honor and trust you, the Lord God."

How does this scripture apply to your situation?

What is a way God has helped to place you on a firm path in the past? Remember, every good and perfect gift comes from above so even if you didn't realize it was God, all good things flow from Him. Share about that experience:

When you doubt that God can be faithful to you during this season, pull up the memory to remind yourself of what is true.

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week four! *Be sure to send out a reminder about this week's challenge to your group, and to encourage them to make it to the next class.*

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Bravery" is about the everyday, not always straightforward steps you take as you begin to tackle your tunnel. Leading with honesty is key to this lesson. As before, you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went. Was everyone able to finish the full challenge?
- What did you do to spend special time with God? How did it feel?
- How did it go implementing your action step? What did you learn from doing so?
- How might this past week's challenges help you moving forward?
- Didn't do the challenge? What blocked you? What might you be able to do differently this week to successfully complete the next challenge?
- Answer any questions.

Get Started: Explain that God defines "Bravery" a little differently than you might think. Being messy and honest with your Creator is at the heart of spiritual bravery. This lesson will also follow the same format as the previous lesson. *Once you're ready, start the video.*



4 | Bravery

Grab the Keys

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 3 & 4

Romans 1:28-30

Psalms 5:5-6

Ephesians 4:26

Ephesians 6:10

Philippians 4:8

Isaiah 40:11

Proverbs 20:5

Proverbs 29:11

James 1:2-4

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

Bravery is about working through our messiness with God. Let's do some of that now.

What is your biggest challenge in choosing to define yourself by God's love versus your circumstances, your victories or your failures?

What is the difference between positive and negative fear?

How might negative fear play a role in your situation?

When you look at your tunnel, would you describe it as trauma, a slow-growing wound or an ignored wound?

What do you think some of your underlying causes might be? Spend some time here exploring and writing or drawing about it here.

What are you afraid of facing and why?

Isaiah 40:11 in the VOICE version says, “He will feed His fold like a shepherd; He will gather together His lambs—the weak and the wobbly ones—into His arms. He will carry them close to His bosom, and tenderly lead like a shepherd the mother of her lambs.”

You are worth healing and you are worth growing. How can this help you moving forward?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

EXPLORE

In your situation, what is out of your control? What do you have control over?

How do you feel in this situation?

How might you connect with God over your list?

What are some fears you may need to face?

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss "REFLECT & RESPOND."

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

We all have deep roots behind the fear that blocks us. I call those the deeper "why" behind your response. What might the "why" behind your fear be? Explore some ideas here:

What might be a God-honoring way to deal with your anger toward yourself or others?

Remember, your feelings are your feelings; you don't need to pretend they're not there. Still, negatively reacting hurts us. What are some emotional rights you may have to give up in order to respond differently?

I mention several tools that can help you find strength when you catch yourself reacting. Which one(s) resonated with you, and how might you use it moving forward?

What are some of your triggers?

How can you handle them differently through the lens of faith?

Remember: focus on what you CAN do with God.

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section three:

What is your biggest fear in diving in and dealing with your root issues?

Read the following scriptures:

"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me" (Philippians 4:13).

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:31,37).

While it may feel worse before it feels better, what do these scriptures tell you?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Day-to-day bravery is a process. It begins by engaging with God, embracing the messiness you find in your life, and learning to work through your tunnel with your Creator. Whether you got into your tunnel through trauma, a slow-growing wound, or an ignored wound, bravery continues every time you remember to define yourself by God's view of who you are, not by your circumstances. Hand over to Him what you have no control over and face your fears. Surrender your rights to God. Discover the lies the enemy throws your way and what triggers them, then replace them with truth.

It takes bravery to face our mistakes and learn from them, to tackle situations we view as being other people's faults, and be willing to discover how we can grow even within that situation. Yet as we lean into God, our challenges and our victories will refine us into something greater. We become men and women of character, the battle-seasoned warrior who is wise and strong and free – a true survivor. This is God's plan for us, His hope and desire for us. "Yes, be bold and strong! Banish fear and doubt! For remember, the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

LIFE CHECK

After the One Minute Take-Away is over, stop the video and take some time to discuss everyone's response. Next, give participants 7-10 minutes to begin writing in response to the questions below. Go through as many of the questions together as time permits, modeling honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge.

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

Think about the lies you tell yourself. Write down 1-2 reasons why you may feel this way, and what 1-2 of your triggers may be:

When you buy into this lie, what happens?

How can you dismantle the faulty belief system?

Write down how God feels about you during this situation:

Go over this week's challenges together and answer any questions. Be sure everyone is comfortable finding scriptures; if not, direct them back to page 26 "Finding Scriptures." Talk about the weekly devotionals and ask what people have gotten out of them so far. Dismiss.

CHALLENGE

- This week's challenge requires more time so make space in your schedule!
- Go over your list again, adding to it if necessary. How can you connect with God over your list? Begin to ponder and explore with God how you got into your tunnel and what the root issues of your situation might be. What rights might you have to give up? What are some practical ways you can lean into God when you want to react negatively? How can you keep your Vision in front of you during these times?
- Next, find 1-2 scriptures that remind you how God really feels about you during your times of struggle and post them where you can see them. Be prepared to share about where you are at in your process in the next opening LIFE CHECK.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week four!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Triggers

What sets you off? What are some of the triggers that send you to dark places? While I don't always know ahead of time something is going to trigger a negative reaction in me, I certainly know how it feels when it happens! My blood pressure rises, my cheeks flush; I get very emotional or very numb very quickly. How do you react when you're triggered?

Being able to recognize how we react places power in our hands. Why? If you know what to look for, you can begin to catch yourself before it gets too out of hand. Think of the last time something negatively triggered you and took you to a place of shame, anger, hurt or bitterness.

Now, spend some time visualizing that exact same situation, but this time with God on your side. Maybe you'd recall a scripture you've been focusing on, or give yourself a spiritual "time out." Maybe you'd choose to walk away and not engage. Maybe you'd give yourself permission to weep this time. Whatever you land on, envision the whole thing in your mind right now, only done differently.

The next time you sense something triggering you, what can you do to be proactive instead of reactive?

In 1 Timothy 4:7-8 it says, “Stay clear of silly stories that get dressed up as religion. Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever. You can count on this. Take it to heart. This is why we’ve thrown ourselves into this venture so totally. We’re banking on the living God, Savior of all men and women, especially believers.”

Training involves effort over time. Remember, it’s Christ’s love that moves us forward, not our own determination. He gives us strength, not ourselves. With that in mind, how can you begin to exercise this skill with God so He can strengthen your ability to fight back more effectively?

DEVOTIONAL #2

Treasure Chest

Find 2-3 new scriptures that remind you that God is trustworthy and has you in the midst of your tunnel and write them out here or on your index cards.

Now, gather together all the scriptures you’ve collected so far (and the ones you’ve been meaning to add). If you haven’t put them on index cards yet, do so now. If you already have them on cards, go ahead and arrange them by topic.

For example, if you have several scriptures about fear, about God's faithfulness, and about God's love for you, you will put the scriptures that fit behind each heading or color-code them by heading. Be as creative or as simple as you want to be! The point of doing this is simply because it helps you to find scriptures you need for specific challenges or situations. For my creative folks, here is but one example to the right.



When you're done, you'll have a powerful spiritual treasure chest full of scriptural truths that encourage and build into your soul. Consider sharing your set in your next opening life check!

DEVOTIONAL #3

The Truth About "Sin"

Sin is a heavy word that has a lot of weird connotations to it. It's not a word you hear often anymore. Many of us were spiritually beaten over the head with that word. It made us feel horrible, like we had to say a lot of Hail Mary's or Our Father's to even think about getting clean. Or do lots and lots of good deeds at the very least!

I want to change the way you view sin. Yes, it's not a good thing, but for different reasons than you may have been led to believe. Simply put, sin is the unhealthy choices we make that separate us from God and others. That is why God hates it so much. He hates to see you hurting, and He knows negative choices, a.k.a. sin, will hurt you. It's that simple!

How might that understanding change the way you perceive sin?

Read the following passage from the book of Galatians:

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.

Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original (Galatians 5:19-26, MSG).

Wow! I love that. You and I are originals, one of a kind. A masterpiece in the making. Pretty cool.

Could you see any of your own roots at the beginning of that passage? I sure do! I have done virtually everything on that list. My guess is you have some of those same struggles, too. Yet the rest of the passage is a roadmap back to wholeness. How can practicing spiritual bravery and connection in your life (versus just holding it as an idea in your head or heart) enhance God's vision for you of living as His original masterpiece?

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week five! Once again, send out a reminder about this week's challenge to your group, and encourage them to make it to the next class.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Connection with Others" is about cultivating spiritual relationships with other people, the kind that help you grow as a person. Be aware that for some, friendship is their spiritual tunnel. Once again, prepare to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went.
- How did you connect with God over your list?
- Has anyone begun to realize their tunnel may be different than what they thought? Explain.
- What root issues are you beginning to identify? Did you come up with some practical ideas on how to lean into God when you want to react and/or let go of your vision?
- What scriptures did you choose and why?
- What are you learning about yourself so far in this process?

Get Started: Explain that "Connection with Others" is all about developing the kind of relationships with people that are real, honest, and propel you toward healthy spiritual growth. The lesson will follow the same format as the previous lesson. **Once you're ready, start the video.**



5 | Connection with Others

Strength for the Journey

SCRIPTURES

<i>Ecclesiastes 4:12</i>	<i>Proverbs 12:26; 15:22 17:17, 19b; 18:24; 27:6a; 27:9b</i>		
<i>Job 6:14</i>	<i>John 5:11-13</i>	<i>1 John 4:12</i>	<i>Luke 6:38</i>
<i>Matthew 10:16</i>	<i>John 15:1-2</i>	<i>James 1:5, 19</i>	<i>Proverbs 27:17</i>
<i>Proverbs 24:3-4</i>	<i>Proverbs 26:28</i>	<i>Matthew 26:40-41</i>	

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

EXPLORE

What are the qualities you would like to have in a friend? List them here.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

How do you offer the qualities you listed above in your relationships with others? How can you grow?

Who are your Wise Advisors? How have they impacted your life for the good?

If not having friends is your tunnel, what might your first steps be toward finding one?

How might you include a Wise Advisor more meaningfully as you battle through your tunnel?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

We discussed being seen versus being burned, to make people earn the right to be close to you. Let people in by degrees as they've shown they can handle it (and let others do the same). Good friendships involve choice. Not all friends are created equally, and you get to choose who you surround yourself with. Do you need to do any pruning in your current relationships? Are there some strong ones you need to focus in on more? Write or draw about that here:

Emotions can be beautiful, but they can also be deceiving. God says, "The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But I, GOD, search the heart and examine the mind. I get to the heart of the human. I get to the root of things. I treat them as they really are, not as they pretend to be" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Um, wow. Kind of a stunner, right? But God is making it crystal clear for us that our emotions have the ability to lie to us every time.

How can knowing this actually help you in your relationships?

Many of us are happy to serve others, but we have a very difficult time allowing others to serve us. Does this describe you? How might you actually be hurting other people by responding that way?

What can you consider doing differently moving forward?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

We are wired to need relationships, but not all relationships are created equally. Some relationships, in fact, are toxic and need to be cut out of our lives. Yet we all need Wise Advisors, people who have our best interests at heart and are committed to helping us grow. You can tell if someone is a Wise Advisor if they are willing to tell you the truth even if it's painful, and they are willing to love you in the midst of your messiness. These are intentional relationships that need to be nourished and developed, partly by being a strong friend in return. Wise Advisors are great resources for prayer, advice and support, and they will help refresh your spirit.

LIFE CHECK

After the One Minute Take-Away is over, stop the video and take some time to discuss everyone's response. Then give participants 7-10 minutes to begin writing in response to the questions below. Next, discuss as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave about 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge.

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

1. Are there any high gates you've been building to keep people out? If so, how might you start prayerfully tearing them down?
2. James 1:5 says, "And if anyone longs to be wise, ask God for wisdom and he will give it! He won't see your lack of wisdom as an opportunity to scold you over your failures but he will overwhelm your failures with his generous grace." Is there anything you need to ask God for wisdom in as it relates to your Wise Advisor relationships?

3. Are there times you listen to people over God? Or ignore a piece of good advice from a friend? I sure have! What is one action you can take in the future to avoid this?

4. In Luke 6:38 it says: "Don't hold back—give freely, and you'll have plenty poured back into your lap—a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, brimming over. You'll receive in the same measure you give." How does this apply to your current friendships?

Go over this week's challenge together and answer any questions. As this week's challenge may not be as time consuming, encourage your group to consider going back and doing any devotionals they may have missed this week. Once you are done, dismiss.

CHALLENGE

Come up with one specific action you can take this week to grow as a friend and put it into practice. Be prepared to share how it went in the next opening LIFE CHECK. And, if you already have Wise Advisor relationships, consider asking what ONE of your blind spots are. Trust me when I say one is enough for now. Don't be afraid to ask for a few strengths, too, so you don't get discouraged or give the enemy a foothold.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week five!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Friends

Whether having close, spiritual friendships is your tunnel, or if you're blessed with deep, intimate friendships, one thing is for sure. We can all grow in our ability to love well! Let's further explore a key scripture about friendship together, Proverbs 27:17. Here are a few common Bible translations of this verse:

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (NIV)

"In the same way that iron sharpens iron, a person sharpens the character of his friend." (VOICE)

"As iron sharpens iron, so people can improve each other." (NCV)

"A friendly discussion is as stimulating as the sparks that fly when iron strikes iron." (TLB)

Which version of this verse most stands out to you and why?

If you've ever observed metalworkers in action, you can't miss the dazzling display of sparks as they mold and shape the metal. It's a sight to behold, isn't it? But those sparks, as mesmerizing as they are, can also cause harm if they stray into the wrong places. Take a moment to recall a conversation where sparks flew in a negative direction, leaving behind a trail of discomfort or conflict.

Now, jot down the disparities between these two types of conversations. Consider how they influenced your relationships and your personal journey. Write down your reflections, noting the impact of both the sparks that hindered and those that ignited growth.

Now that you've reflected on the differences between these conversations, consider how you can apply these insights in your future interactions. How might you navigate conversations differently to minimize harmful sparks and maximize opportunities for growth and connection?

Be sure to add your favorite version of Proverbs 27:17 to your index cards or collection of scriptures!

DEVOTIONAL #2

Personality

Let's talk introverts versus extroverts. An introvert is someone who tends to feel more energized and focused in solitary or low-stimulation environments, preferring to recharge alone after social interactions. An extrovert is a person who gains energy and thrives in social settings, feeling more stimulated and energized by interacting with others. There is also what is called an ambivert, someone who falls in between the two. This person feels comfortable and energized in both social and solitary settings and can adapt to different situations but may still need occasional alone time to recharge.

Reflecting on your own experiences, which category do you believe best describes you: introvert, extrovert, or ambivert?

How do you recognize this in your daily life? Share some specific signs or behaviors that indicate your preference for solitude or social interaction.

In light of understanding your personality preference (introvert, extrovert, or ambivert), how can you leverage your strengths to deepen your friendships in a way that honors both your needs and those of your friends?

How can you step out of your comfort zone to connect with others who may have different personality preferences than your own?

Read these biblical teachings on love, empathy, and unity: [Romans 12:9-10](#) and [Philippians 2:4](#). Consider how you can apply these principles to cultivate inclusive and supportive friendships across personality types.

If you found any of these verses particularly helpful, add them to your scripture collection!

DEVOTIONAL #3

Finding Strength in Weakness

Can you identify with the challenge of allowing others to serve and help you out? A great role model to look to is the Apostle Paul. He was given a physical handicap, one that made him more dependent. Though he never lets us know what the handicap is, we do know the following:

Because of the extravagance of those revelations [I received], and so I wouldn't get a big head, I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. Satan's angel did his best to get me down; what he in fact did was push me to my knees. No danger then of walking around high and mighty! At first I didn't think of it as a gift, and begged God to remove it. Three times I did that, and then he told me,

My grace is enough; it's all you need.

My strength comes into its own in your weakness.

Once I heard that, I was glad to let it happen. I quit focusing on the handicap and began appreciating the gift. It was a case of Christ's strength moving in on my weakness. Now I take limitations in stride, and with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down to size—abuse, accidents, opposition, bad breaks. I just let Christ take over! And so the weaker I get, the stronger I become. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Reflecting on your own experiences, why do you think it might be difficult (or easy) for you to accept assistance from others?

How might allowing others to serve you actually make you stronger?

Are there any misconceptions or fears holding you back from accepting help from others? Consider Jesus' example in John 13 when he washes his disciples' feet. In biblical times, people walked A LOT. Feet got very, very dirty. It was normal to have to wash your feet at the end of the day. In fact, if you had any money, you would have your servant wash your feet because it was considered an onerous task.

So, when Jesus prepares to personally wash his disciples' dirty feet, Peter isn't having it. He does not want Jesus to serve him, especially in such a humbling way. He declares, "You're not going to wash my feet—ever!"

Now look at Jesus' response: "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing."

Wow, does that challenge me! I want to be a part of what Jesus is doing. And that includes not only being willing to wash others' feet but also to be willing to allow someone to wash mine. Think about some reciprocal acts of service and encouragement opportunities you can create within your friendships. Then, reflect below on how embracing vulnerability and relying on the support of others can deepen your friendships and strengthen your faith.

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week six! Don't forget to send out a reminder about this week's challenge to your group, and to encourage them to make it to the next class.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Intentionality" is where you will begin to create a definable action plan to implement in your day-to-day life. Once again, this week you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the questions first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went. What specific action did you take to grow as a friend?
- Was it hard or easy for you? Why?
- Did anyone ask for a blind spot? How did it go and what did you learn?
- If you didn't do the challenge, what blocked you? What might you be able to do differently this week to accomplish the next challenge?
- Did anyone do the devotionals? How did it help augment what you're learning?

Get Started: Explain that "Intentionality" is in some ways the most important step in the Boldly Shine process, and the one God is most interested in. The lesson will follow the same format as the previous lesson. **Once you're ready, start the video.**



6 | Intentionality

Start Driving

SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 26:11

Psalms 28:7

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Proverbs 21:5

Proverbs 14:15

Ephesians 6:17

Hebrews 4:12

Psalms 37:4-6

Proverbs 16:17

Ephesians 6:16-18

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

God works to change us from the inside out. Bravery allows us to tackle the internal lies and barriers and replace them with God's freeing truths. Intentionality includes the actual steps and solutions to deal with our circumstances. How is using this process different from just coming up with a plan?

Have you ever looked to God to help you come up with a game plan for change? If so, how did it help? And if not, why might it make your plans more effective?

What are some practical ways you can extend yourself grace as you learn to move forward with your God-directed plan? How can you make God central to your plan making?

In 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Paul tells us, “The world is unprincipled. It’s dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn’t fight fair. But we don’t live or fight our battles that way—never have and never will. The tools of our trade aren’t for marketing or manipulation, but they are for demolishing that entire massively corrupt culture. We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.”

How does this apply to making intentional plans with God versus hoping He’ll bless what you come up with on your own?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

Role Play Ideas

1st Role play: Budget

What are the smaller specific steps you can take to creating and maintaining a budget? Write down your ideas.

2nd Role play:

External Struggle

Internal Struggle

What is your goal? (remember to simplify it)

What are your smaller steps within that goal? (both short & long term)

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

It really doesn't take a whole lot more time to be intentional in your plans, but it makes all the difference. Why is it important to break your plan down into specific, manageable steps?

How can asking someone to hold you accountable to your plan be helpful? Who might you ask to hold you accountable?

Remember that old song, "Put one foot in front of the other, and soon you'll be walking out the door!" This holds true for intentional goals as well. What does patience look like for you as you work through your tunnel?

The longer and more complex your challenge is, the more important it is to stay tied into God. How can you do that as you work through your own challenge?

What are your God-given priorities? Pray and then write them down here. Think of your own tunnel and what your goal might be. Remember to simplify your goal into something that is easy to remember and pray over.

Being intentional isn't always easy, especially when God calls us to do something that is hard or scary. Isaiah 41:13 says, "I am Yahweh, your mighty God! I grip your right hand and won't let you go! I whisper to you: 'Don't be afraid; I am here to help you!' How can this scripture help you in those moments?"

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

As you tackle your own tunnel, listen to God's direction. Approach your challenges one-by-one, both internally and externally. Invite God into the process. Decide on your big goal or goals. Make sure any goal you make respects your overall God-given priorities (family, sense of self, etc.). Then simplify your goal and pray for it daily.

Choose the intentional order of your steps after praying and seeking advice, focusing on what most needs to happen first. Be sure to include your wise advisor(s) in your process. Then, break down each goal into small, manageable steps that you can work on one at a time. Be sure you're experiencing some success in one area before you move on to the next.

Be aware God's design may not always be the easiest or the most logical, but it is the one that works. Trust His guidance. Proverb 11:23 tells us, "The desire of the righteous ends only in good." In time, you will see the fruit of your efforts!

LIFE CHECK

After the One Minute Take-Away is over, stop the video and take some time to discuss everyone's response. Then give participants 12-15 minutes to begin writing in response to the questions below. Next, discuss as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave about 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge.

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

1. Take a moment to think about what one of your big goals might be. Write or draw your ideas here:

2. Next, write or draw about how your big goal fits into your God-given priorities.

3. What do you see as being the biggest obstacle(s) to your goal? Why is that?

4. Who did you think of to get help with your challenge? How will you approach them?

5. What did you learn about yourself through this process?

Go over this week's challenges together. Remember, you will only get out of this process what you put in, so be sure to make space to tackle the challenges, even if using the action plan doesn't feel like something you would naturally do. Discuss as a group how to fit the challenge in. If time permits, give what's left of class time to start on the Action Plan. Then dismiss.

CHALLENGE

1. Set aside time this week to prayerfully decide what your first big goal should be and prayerfully create an action plan using the template below.

2. What is one scripture you can memorize to help you when you need it?

3. Do at least one of the steps from your plan this week.

4. Be prepared to share how it went in the next opening LIFE CHECK.

FORMAT for INTENTIONALITY ACTION PLAN

My Tunnel:

My Internal struggles:

My External struggles:

Define what my goal is:

Simplify my goal (phrase):

My God-aligned priorities:

My steps/goals (break down into manageable pieces):

Short-Term	Long-Term
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

If you would like to download additional ACTION PLAN templates, go to <http://www.thedentedfender.com/actionplan>.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week six!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

You Belong

ACTIVITY: In those moments where my bravery and intentionality are being put to the test, whether by neediness or fear, one of my favorite scriptures is found in Isaiah 44:2-5a:

“Don’t be afraid, I’ve redeemed you. I’ve called your name. You’re mine. When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you. When you’re in rough waters, you will not go down. When you’re between a rock and a hard place, it won’t be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God, the Holy of Israel, your Savior. I paid a huge price for you: all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in! That’s how much I love you! I’d sell off the whole world to get you back, trade the creation just for you. So don’t be afraid: I’m with you.”

Now, write your name in every blank below:

“Don’t be afraid, _____, I’ve redeemed you.

I’ve called your name. You’re mine. When you’re in over your head,

_____, I’ll be there with you. When

you’re in rough waters, you will not go down. When you’re between a rock and a

hard place, it won’t be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God,

_____, the Holy of Israel, your Savior.

I paid a huge price for you: all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in! That’s how

much I love you _____! I’d sell off the whole

world to get you back, trade the creation just for you. So don’t be afraid

_____: I’m with you,” (MSG).

Next, read it again OUT LOUD with your name included. It’s powerful, isn’t it? Whenever you’re feeling weak, do this exercise!

DEVOTIONAL #2

Let's Get Proactive!

When you decide to be intentional in how you go through life, you go from being reactive to proactive about your circumstances. But, as former coach Tony Dungy notes, "Most of us don't like rules. We don't like being told what to do or when to do it or even how to do it. We like to be independent...because we believe we know what's best."

Dungy continues, "But want to know a little secret? Oftentimes, we have NO IDEA what the best decision is. And we end up making mistake after mistake after mistake. That's why God gives us truth and that's why He convicts us to follow His word."

Go, Tony! I agree. So today, I want to share with you some great scriptures both Tony and I picked out about obedience. As you read them, think about how this might help you to open your mind and your heart to trying this process even if it feels funny to you.

"If you profit from constructive criticism, you will be elected to the wise men's hall of fame. But to reject criticism is to harm yourself and your own best interests. Humility and reverence for the Lord will make you both wise and honored" (Proverbs 15:31-33).

"Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22)

"Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching'" (John 14:23).

"The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17).

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

"Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray" (Proverbs 10:17).

Now, pick one of those scriptures—the one that most jumped out at you. Write below how you could incorporate the principle of that verse in your day-to-day life.

Finally, add the verse you chose to your scripture cards. When you're tempted to take short cuts, pull it out and remind yourself that God's ways work!

DEVOTIONAL #3

Leaps of Faith

God asks us to take risks, leaps of faith that can be scary to take sometimes. Today, go to <https://www.thedentedfender.com/post/push-past-fear> and read my blog on tackling the fear that keeps us from taking those necessary leaps forward. Then answer the following:

What are some of the fears you have that keep you from reaching for the goals and dreams God has laid on your heart?

What are some practical ways you can make sure your goals and dreams are aligned with God's goal and dreams for you versus just doing what you think is best?

Spend time in prayer today and throughout the week to offer up your fears and dreams to God. Ask him to direct your path and give you the courage to move forward and onward.

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week seven! *Once again, send out a reminder about this week's challenge to your group, and be sure encourage them to make it to the next class so they don't miss anything.*

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Consistency" is about helping you to develop the habits you need to make it through the hard parts of life—and appreciate the good parts even more! Once again, this week you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went. Was everyone able to finish the full challenge?
- What internal and external struggles did you identify?
- What is your simplified goal?
- How does your goal align with your God-given priorities?
- What is your first action step, and when do you plan to implement it?
- If someone didn't do the challenge, what blocked you? What might you be able to do differently this week to accomplish the next challenge?
- Answer any questions.

Get Started: Explain that "Consistency" is about creating meaningful, Godly habits that help you stay strong through every life season. This lesson will also follow the same format as the previous lesson. *Once you're ready, start the video.*



7 | Consistency

Tackling the Detours

SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 3:6	Proverbs 4:11	Proverbs 4:26	Proverbs 5:11
Proverbs 9:6	Proverbs 12:28	Proverbs 15:9	1 John 2:15-17
2 Corinthians 5:14-15	Psalms 18:35	Hebrews 5:7	Psalms 46:10
2 Corinthians 12:9	1 Corinthians 9:25	1 John 4:18	Proverbs 6:6-11
2 Corinthians 12:7-10	Psalms 18:16-19	Proverbs 2:7	John 15:4
1 Peter 1:5-7	Hebrews 5:14		Luke 5:16

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

EXPLORE

Where are you at in the Boldly Shine process so far?

Do you have an action plan yet? Does your vision need to be refined? Are you discovering any new triggers or root challenges? Share here:

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

Consistency, discipline, wisdom and diligence are all synonyms. For our purposes, consistency is training for the important step of developing and maintaining healthy habits by consistently walking with God. Why might that be important?

How does Consistency work hand-in-hand with Connection with God?

Jesus chose to die for you so you could be healed and transformed. What are some ways His love can motivate you as you work through your tunnel?

Do you tend to engage in monologues or dialogues with God? What gets in your way of genuinely connecting with Him?

IN is about going deep with God. UP is about praising God and helping others. What are some ways you can practice IN and UP in your life?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

What is harder for you: finding time or having energy? What most stood out to you about this?

What are some creative ways you can squeeze time in with God during a time crunch?

How can you make some time for yourself doing the things you love so your spirit gets refreshed?

There are ramifications for our choices. How might procrastinating or hiding from your challenge hurt you?

When you have those late-night wrestling matches with your anxiety and fear, what are some ways you can fight back?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Consistency comes from spending time with God, and developing healthy life rhythms with Him, looking both In and Up. Evaluate your steps with Him, and put into place what you're learning. Remember to extend yourself grace seasoned with truth. Keep abiding with God, wrestling with Him through your struggles, so He can move you forward on your path.

LIFE CHECK

Stop the video at the conclusion of the One Minute Take-Away and then discuss your responses. Give participants 10-12 minutes to start writing responses to the questions below. Next, discuss as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave about 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge.

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

1. What is one way you can grow in your walk with God? What might be an obstacle to overcome? How will you overcome it?
2. What are you learning about yourself?

3. What will be your biggest obstacle to developing consistency in your life? How might you tackle it?

4. Letting go of control and placing the reins firmly in God's hands can be scary but is so worth it! What are some possible benefits of letting God steer your ship versus you?

5. Sometimes we need encouragement, but sometimes we need a kick in the pants! What is a good scripture for you to pull out when you're tempted to give in? Find one and write the reference here, and then copy it onto an index card to add to your collection.

Go over this week's challenges together. Remind your group that they will only get out of this process what they put in, so be sure to make space to meaningfully complete the challenges and the devotionals. Discuss as a group how to fit them in this week. Answer any questions and dismiss.

CHALLENGE

1. During your time with God this week evaluate your steps in this course so far. How is it going? Does anything need to be tweaked or refined?
2. Think of one IN and one UP activity you can do over the next few weeks.
3. Google different prayer acronyms or ways to study the Bible and try one this week.
4. Be prepared to share the scriptures of grace and truth you found helpful during the next opening LIFE CHECK.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week seven!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Hand-in-Hand

Maya Angelou wrote, *"One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest."*

As this quote shows, bravery and consistency work together. What are some practical ways you can consistently apply bravery to your life?

Spend the next few minutes searching up some quotes that inspire you. Today, consider posting the quotes you found along with the one above somewhere you will see often. Then when you need encouragement, all you'll have to do is look!

DEVOTIONAL #2

Oh Lord, My Strength

Grab your Bible and read [Psalm 18](#) today in its entirety. When you see references to enemies or foes, remember your enemies are the broken thoughts that assail you. Read it to yourself once, then read it out loud. Try to put your name in there a few times. Lastly, write down what you learned about yourself and God here.

DEVOTIONAL #3

Abide

Abiding in God is the most profound game changer you will ever find. There is nothing that can replace the power that comes from true intimacy with your creator. Open your Bible and let's take a look at John 15 together.

[Read verses 1-4](#). Obviously, Jesus isn't talking about growing grapes off of you! What might the fruit that Jesus is referring to be? (hint: see [Galatians 5:22-23](#) & [Philippians 4:8-9](#) if you need help).

How do we receive these fruits?

Read [verses 5-8](#). Hmm. I've definitely been the withered branch, but I've also experienced the blessing of abundant fruit. How about you? What are some practical ways you can make sure to have more fruitfulness on a day-to-day basis?

Read [verses 9-17](#). Wow! Jesus gives us the secret to finding complete joy. What two things does he say we need to find it?

How might you implement those things during this time?

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week eight! Remind your group about this week's challenge. Encourage them to attend the next class and remind them there is only one more week left. Plan to remind participants about the optional 10th week on "Intentional Parenting" and consider getting a head count of those who plan to attend so you can plan accordingly.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Intentionality with Others" is about taking responsibility and reaching for healing in damaged relationships. Once again, this week you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went. Was everyone able to finish the full challenge?
- As you evaluated your steps in this course so far, what did you learn?
- How did your IN and UP activities go? What did you do, and how might you use these ideas moving forward?
- Did anyone try a prayer acronym? What did you think of the process?
- What two scriptures did you pick for grace and for truth? Why did you pick them, and how might you use them in the future?

Get Started: Explain that "Intentionality with Others" is an important step in learning to heal and move forward differently through relationships. The lesson format is the same as before. **Once you're ready, start the video.**



8 | Intentionality with Others

Keep Driving

SCRIPTURES

Mark 10:27

Isaiah 30:15

Jeremiah 8:6

Luke 15:10

2 Corinthians 7:9-11

Colossians 1:19-20

Proverbs 14:23

James 2:22

1 John 3:16

Ephesians 4:29

Philippians 2:12-14

Romans 12:2

Matthew 12:33

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

In what ways have you perhaps misunderstood the concept of repentance?

Is there anything you need to own in the way you've treated others?

What most stood out to you about true repentance, and how can you personally apply it?

How can God's grace and love in the midst of your wrong choices help you to grow and change?

What excuses are you tempted to make, especially when someone else also needs to make some changes to their behavior but hasn't done so yet?

Read the following: "My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love—so you can't know him if you don't love" (1 John 4:7-8).

How might this help you to focus on your actions versus someone else's?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

Changed actions bring trust. How can you personally apply this?

Sometimes, putting someone's needs before your own can include putting an emotional boundary in place between the two of you to keep each of you safe. Other times, it means putting aside your desire to lash back or emotionally punish. What might this mean in your life?

Surrender is the hardest part of the repentance process for me, probably because I value control. How about you? Is there something you need to surrender to Jesus? Share your thoughts here:

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

EXPLORE

Vision, Connection, Bravery, Intentionality, Consistency and Boldly Shining apply to our relationships, too! Explore here what a realistic vision for your relationships might look like:

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section three:

What most stood out to you from this section?

Are you constantly second-guessing your decisions? You might be holding onto an unrealistic vision of who you should be. Is there anything you need to explore here?

What's one practical way you can embrace your messiness instead of constantly fighting for perfection?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Repentance literally means “to turn,” and signifies a turning point in your life. It begins from a place of brokenness over what you’ve done, but placed firmly within the framework of God’s healing love for you. It stems from understanding how much you’ve been forgiven for, how priceless you are to God in the midst of your dysfunction, and allowing that love to motivate you forward. As you move forward, remember to give heart-felt apologies when appropriate, while keeping your focus on letting your actions speak louder than your words.

Use the process you will learn about next in BOLDLY SHINE and apply it to your relationship(s) that need(s) healing. Include the other person in the process if they’re open to doing so. If not, commit to still use the process. Changes you alone make will still have a positive impact on the relationship. Set up realistic expectations, and continually refine your vision with God and your Wise Advisors as you go. Get professional help if need be. In time, you will experience change.

As a reminder:

1. Own your mistakes & don’t make excuses
2. Let your actions do the talking
3. Put their needs first
4. Surrender

LIFE CHECK

Stop the video at the conclusion of the One Minute Take-Away and then discuss your responses. Give participants 7-10 minutes to start writing responses to the questions below. Next, discuss as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave about 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week’s challenge.

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

1. What are you learning about yourself in your relationships with others?
2. What struck you most on a personal level from this session and why?
3. What are some ways you can be sure to let God drive your repentance process versus guilt, anger or perfectionism?

Go over this week's challenges together. Remind folks that the Intentional Action Plan template on page 58 may be helpful in completing the challenges. Discuss as a group how to fit everything in, and who each person is considering talking to about his or her process. Answer any questions and dismiss.

CHALLENGE

Write or draw your answers to the following in your notes.

1. Think of the person or people you most need to focus on. Write down the name(s). Now, what is your big goal with the relationship(s) you are focusing on? What should your action plan be?
2. What are some smaller, manageable steps to achieving this goal? What will your very first (or next) step be? How might you need to modify your plan as you move forward?

3. How can you involve your Wise Advisors in your process? How can you involve your significant other in the process if appropriate?

4. Be prepared to share about which part of this challenge was hardest & easiest for you and why in the next opening LIFE CHECK.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week eight!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Find Your Shelter and Strength

Isaiah 30:15 says, "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength." What jumps out at you from this verse personally?

How can you practically apply this to your current relationships?

Finish by reading Psalm 46:1-3: "God is our shelter and our strength. When troubles seem near, God is nearer, and He's ready to help. So why run and hide? No fear, no pacing, no biting fingernails. When the earth spins out of control, we are sure and fearless. When mountains crumble and the waters run wild, we are sure and fearless. Even in heavy winds and huge waves, or as mountains shake, we are sure and fearless." (VOICE)

What most stands out to you about Psalm 46:1-3?? What might God be trying to say to you right now about your situation?

DEVOTIONAL #2

True Change

Today, let's explore a few versions of 2 Corinthians 7:10-11.

"Now this type of deep sorrow, godly sorrow, is not so much about regret; but it is about producing a change of mind and behavior that ultimately leads to salvation. But the other type of sorrow, worldly sorrow, often is fleeting and only brings death. Look at what is happening among you! Notice how authentic and diligent you have become because this godly sorrow has been at work in your community. But there's more: your desire to clear your name, your righteous anger, your respect, your longing, your zeal, and your concern for justice. All these demonstrate how you have been made clean." (VOICE)

"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. For consider how much diligence this very thing—this grieving as God wills—has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter." (CSB)

"For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right." (NLT)

As you read these different translations, you begin to get a fuller sense of what true repentance really means. What stands out to you from the readings?

Now let's explore some personal application. From your reading, what specifically applies to you in your situation? Write about it here:

Last but not least, write down one action step you can take this week to display true repentance, and then implement it!

DEVOTIONAL #3

Boundaries

Sometimes we need to put emotional boundaries in place in our relationships, and sometimes others do so with us. Jesus talks about this in Matthew 18:15-18:

"If your fellow believer sins against you, you must go to that one privately and attempt to resolve the matter. If he responds, your relationship is restored. But if his heart is closed to you, then go to him again, taking one or two others with you. You'll be fulfilling what the Scripture teaches when it says, 'Every word may be verified by the testimony of two or three witnesses. And if he refuses to listen, then share the issue with the entire church in hopes of restoration. If he still refuses to respond, disregarding the fellowship of his church family, you must disregard him as though he were an outsider, on the same level as an unrepentant sinner. Receive this truth: Whatever you forbid on earth will be considered to be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will be considered to be released in heaven.'"

Jesus wasn't afraid to establish boundaries. And while this scripture applies to sin happening within the church, there are still some important principles we can glean from this for our relationships. List 2-3 ideas you can use in helping to restore your connections with others:

Jesus follows this passage up with, "Again, I give you an eternal truth: If two of you agree to ask God for something in a symphony of prayer, my heavenly Father will do it for you. For wherever two or three come together in honor of my name, I am right there with them!" (Matthew 18:19-20).

There is power in pulling in your Wise Advisors and praying together for you or someone else. Is there anything you need to pray over or pull in your Wise Advisors about? Describe it here:

Next, make a point of following through today and seeking God in prayer over your situation. Be sure to ask your Wise Advisors to pray on your behalf as well.

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to week Nine! You made it! Prior to meeting, encourage your group to attend this last class and send out a reminder about last week's challenge so they're prepared. Check out "Ending Strong" on the Host Hub suggestions to make this last class meaningful and memorable.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: "Boldly Shine" is about harnessing the power of challenge to shine your light to others. Once again, this week you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Starting with you, have each person share how their weekly challenge went. Was everyone able to finish the full challenge?
- What was the hardest or easiest part to do?
- What quote, scripture or scriptures did you pick and why?
- If you posted your positive truths, where did you post them?
- If someone didn't do the challenge, what blocked you? What might you be able to do differently this week to accomplish the next challenge?
- Answer any questions.

Get Started: Explain that "Boldly Shine" is about the power of inviting God into the very heart of your life's story. The lesson will follow the same format as the previous lessons. **Once you're ready, start the video.**



9 | Boldly Shine

Leaving the Tunnel Behind

SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:14-16

Psalm 103:5

Psalm 119:15

Philippians 4:8

1 Corinthians 6:19

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Galatians 6:9

1 Corinthians 11:24-25

Ephesians 6:11,16

Haggai 2:9

Hebrews 11:32-35

Jeremiah 29:11-12

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

You have a story, one you are writing with God right now. What would you like this next chapter with Him to be like?

How have you succumbed to the less mindset?

Remember, minimizing your gifts is to minimize what God has placed inside of you. With that in mind, what are some of your giftings? What are the good qualities that make up who you are?

Where can you post some of your encouraging truths? How can you begin to internalize them?

I love that God is faithful even when we are faithless! His word is part of how He strengthens our faith when we feel weak. How might keeping your spiritual truths around you help God to bolster your faith?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

What are some things that encourage you that you have let slip to the side during this season? Think of a way you can incorporate some of those things back into your week. Draw or write your ideas here:

Do you struggle with guilt when you take time for yourself? What might God say to you about that?

Mark 12:31 says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." My guess is if you saw your good friend running himself into the ground, you would feel concerned. How can you take that sense of care & concern and apply it to yourself?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take a good 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section three:

What stood out to you in this section?

Recall some of the ways you have celebrated victories in the past. Moving forward, what might you be able to do to mark your big and small moments?

Are there any creative ways you can think of to show your gratitude to the Lord? Write or draw some of your ideas here:

Do you need to draw a line in the sand, to define a definite before and after? If so, what might that look like for you?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Being renewed by God comes when we approach life from a position of faith. It's a decision to reject a "less" mindset and embrace God's spiritual truths for our lives. Part of how we do that is by surrounding ourselves with those very truths consistently, and to allow our vision to evolve and grow as we evolve and grow over time. We also allow God to invest in us, to build up our spirit, and to fill us so we can be strengthened for our journey. Finally, it also includes marking important spiritual moments in our lives, whether those moments are big or small. As we continually engage in this process, God adds to our faith, our peace, and ultimately empowers us to boldly shine.

LIFE CHECK

Stop the video at the conclusion of the One Minute Take-Away and then discuss your responses. Give participants 7-10 minutes to start writing responses to the questions below. Next, discuss as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave about 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenge or adjust as needed if you are doing some of the special activities from "Ending Strong."

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

1. How might you tackle having a less mindset with God?
2. Having a tangible reminder of God's love for you is powerful. What might be something you can buy, create or repurpose for this purpose?
3. Joshua 1:9 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future." In what ways has God already been changing your life since you started this process?
4. Spend some time in prayer thanking Him for the growth you are already experiencing.

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week nine!

CHALLENGE

1. Think of at least one way you can allow God to invest in you, and make time to do that very thing this week.
2. Take time to thank God this week for a victory He's granted you. Remember, it doesn't have to be big!
3. Go to <http://www.thedentedfender.com/resources> to get more information on making a God-directed Vision Board. Consider making one!
4. Spend some time journaling about what boldly shining means to you, and how you might continue to implement the principles you've learned throughout the course moving forward.

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL #1

Worship=Strength

We are wired to worship. Its why we tend to idolize people who are famous or highly skilled. While human heroes may let us down, God never does, and worshipping Him actually strengthens us. Consider the following:

"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples" (Psalm 96:1-3).

Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord. Day after day announce, "The Lord has saved us!" (1 Chronicles 16:23).

"When you meet together, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as you praise the Lord with all your heart" (Ephesians 5:19).

For some of us, praise can feel weird and artificial at first. For others, it may come naturally. Regardless, it's something we all need on a consistent basis. Think of some practical ways you can incorporate meaningful praise in your life. Write about them here:

Now, spend some time practicing one of those ideas right now! Once you're done, write below about how you feel.

Remember – any new skill feels awkward at first. Keep at it and you will reap the internal and eternal strength that comes from praise!

DEVOTIONAL #2

Marking the Moments

Today, read my blog on marking the moments ([link](#)), then respond to the following questions.

What are some victories you've been able to experience in your life? Write them down here.

God has everyday miracles available for all of us! Take a moment and think through your current tunnel. How has God been moving you forward as you've been working through the principles from the Boldly Shine class?

Consider picking one or two of the breakthroughs you've experienced and how you might mark that victory. Still waiting on that breakthrough? Think about how you will meaningfully mark that moment when it comes.

Need some help? Check out my "[Marking the Moments](#)" resource for some great ideas.

DEVOTIONAL #3

Personal Reflection

Our course has almost come to an end! What are some practical ways you can keep yourself moving forward using the principles we've discussed (vision, connection, bravery, intentionality, consistency, boldly shine)?

Remember that growth doesn't often happen overnight—unless you're young and in the middle of a growth spurt. I swear my kids would gain an inch from one day to the next sometimes! But for most of us, growth is a process; it takes effort over time.

It's not a matter of if you'll experience setbacks as you move forward. It's a matter of when. Think of some meaningful ways to tackle those setbacks here:

Last but not least, by now you know how important scripture is in fighting back the lies the enemy places before us. When you think about the setbacks you will experience, find a few scriptures that will remind you of what is true. Add them to your index cards so you have encouraging truth at the ready for when times of struggle come.

LEADER NOTE

Welcome to the optional 10th week. For anyone who has children or is a wise advisor to someone with children, this class is a must! Encourage those from your group who feel they would benefit from learning parenting strategies to attend, and plan to send a reminder to them a few days prior to help keep it on their radar. It is okay to invite folks who you think would find this of benefit even if they haven't taken any of the previous classes.

Before You Start: Always make sure you have video/audio components working before folks arrive to ensure a smooth beginning. Be prepared to pause throughout the presentation.

What You Need to Know: “Intentional Parenting” is about successfully navigating through your tunnel with children in tow. This is a longer class, so jump into content fairly quickly and pay attention to the suggested times. Once again, this week you will be directed to pause after some content sections to discuss what you are learning as a group, so be prepared.

Opening Discussion: Consider starting all discussions by answering the question(s) first yourself so people have time to process. Remember to allow those long pauses to give folks a chance to process and think.

- Briefly go over any housekeeping items
- Ask each person to share about the children in their life along with 1-2 things they are hoping to gain from this class.
- Answer any questions.

Get Started: Explain that while “Intentional Parenting” is about parenting successfully through hardships and trials, the concepts covered will help anyone grow in their parenting skills. *Once you're ready, start the video.*



BONUS | Intentional Parenting

Driving with Care

SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:14-16

Psalms 103:5

Psalms 119:15

Philippians 4:8

1 Corinthians 6:19

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Galatians 6:9

1 Corinthians 11:24-25

Ephesians 6:11,16

Haggai 2:9

Hebrews 11:32-35

Jeremiah 29:11-12

NOTES

Look for the blank page at the end of this section to write down your thoughts, ideas or drawings.

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin responding to the questions below in writing. Then, take 15-20 minutes to discuss together.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section one:

You've learned how Vision, Connection, Bravery, Intentionality, Consistency and Boldly Shining work together to move forward out of your tunnel and into God's wonderful light. Now, take a moment to apply those same principles to your family. Don't forget to include Connection and Intentionality with Others!

Intentionally developing and maintaining healthy habits are part of what makes a family strong. How can choosing to "be the parent" help your family grow?

What challenged you most in this section?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 7-8 minutes to begin writing to the questions below. Then, take 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section two:

What healthy boundaries do you need to consider with your kids?

Were you surprised to learn that when kids push, they actually need you to reinforce the rules? How might that help you moving forward?

What is an expectation you have that your child consistently doesn't meet? How might you clarify your expectations and consequences to help set him or her up for success?

Are there any family routines you need to establish, re-establish or be sure to hold onto? How might you make this happen? If you're married, think about ways to get your spouse on board, too!

How balanced is your parenting? How might you grow in this area?

⇒ **Time To Unpause & Continue** *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 10-12 minutes to begin writing to the questions below. Then, take 25-30 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section three:

This is a big section! What stands out to you?

What does it mean to you to model for your child's value before God?

Getting real with your kids can be tricky, especially if your hurt comes from someone else. What might be an appropriate way for you to get open with your child? What pitfalls do you need to be careful to avoid? If you have more than one child, reflect on each of them individually here.

Is there anything you need to apologize to your child about and if so, why is doing so important for both of you to grow?

"You are modeling for your child how to handle ugly life circumstances." How does this apply to your situation?

How can you show love to your daughter and respect to your son?

(If you are a single parent raising a child of the opposite sex, make one of your actions steps to read books like *Love and Respect in the Family* by Dr. Emerson Eggerich. My sons are strong men, and I attribute a lot of that to understanding these important principles. It's a game changer!)

What are some of your defaults in your parenting style?

How can you reach for a more balanced approach?

Are you good at allowing yourself and others to build into you?

Why is it important for your kids to see you model this for them?

"Perfection doesn't guarantee outcome." Respond to that here.

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

When directed, pause the video. Give your group 5-7 minutes to begin writing to the questions below. Then, take 20-25 minutes to discuss the REFLECT & RESPOND questions.

REFLECT & RESPOND to section four:

Your child knows how to manipulate you—well! That's why as parents we have to look at actions over words. What are your child's actions telling you?

Shielding children from the natural consequences of their actions isn't protective; it's actually harmful. How might this impact your parenting?

No one person can do everything on their own. What are some action steps you can take to build into your support network?

Are there any boundaries you might need to put into place within your existing "village?" Explore here.

Is there anything you need to surrender about your family?

⇒ Time To Unpause & Continue *(start video again and listen)*

SUMMARY

Always remember that you are the parent. You can't abdicate that role. Children still need boundaries, even more so in the midst of upheaval and chaos, and it's your job to create and enforce boundaries and routines. Be appropriately real with your kids, but don't play the martyr role with them, either. As you create or maintain healthy routines and rhythms for your family, listen to their needs and model growth and healing for them. Evaluate their actions so you keep the real story of what is going on in front of you. Create a solid community around your family to help support and guide you collectively through your tunnels toward healing. At the end of the day, give your children over into God's hands because His hands are the most capable of all.

LIFE CHECK

Stop the video at the conclusion of the One Minute Take-Away and then discuss your responses. Give participants 5-7 minutes to start writing responses to the questions below. Next, discuss as many of the questions together as time permits, doing your best to model honesty and vulnerability in your own responses. Leave about 5-7 minutes at the end to go over this week's challenges.

One Minute Take-Away:

Questions:

Talking about the consequences of our actions is an important conversation to have. Is there anything you need to discuss with your kiddo(s)? Anything you need to work on personally?

Your child's tunnel is not the same as yours. That means how they think and feel can be radically different than you in the midst of the same circumstances. Assumptions are dangerous! Is there any emotion or thought process you are assuming your child is experiencing that they've never actually shared with you?

What might be some questions you can ask your child for clarification without projecting* your thoughts and feelings on them?

Thinking your child's actions are 100% dependent on you or completely because of you will destroy you. What part of this statement do you most need to own, and why?

Being aware isn't the same as worrying or carrying around constant guilt or fear. How might you find that balance with God?

What do you need to own? What do you need to surrender?

*Projecting is partly about placing undesirable feelings or emotions onto someone else. The goal in our conversations with our children is to seek to understand. Think of a court case. It is illegal to "lead the witness," which means to put words in their mouth or make clear the answer you want them to give versus finding out what their answer actually is. Don't do that to your child(ren)!

Here are some examples of projecting or leading:

"I'm sure you're angry at your mother for saying that to you, aren't you?"

- Uh, not really a question. It's your statement in the form of a question. Plus, you're telling them how to feel about mom.
- A better question: "How did you feel when your mother said ____?" or "What thoughts ran through your mind when your mother said ____?"

“I know how hard this is for you. Tell me about it.”

- You don't know if it's hard for them or not. You need to learn their thoughts first.
- A better question: “Does it feel hard for you? How so (or why not)?”

“You're sad today. Is it because your daddy isn't here?”

- Again, you are assuming they're sad and you know why. You're also making Dad the bad guy.
- A better question: “You seem sad today. What's going on?”

There are times, of course, when we know what our child is feeling and why. Still, empowering them to discover their thoughts and feelings for themselves teaches self-efficacy, or their ability to believe in themselves to deal with various situations. That's an important life skill! Even if you end up being right, you gain a more well-rounded understanding of your child's perspective by asking and listening first.

Be aware sometimes kids aren't sure what they're feeling (just like you aren't always sure). Emotion charts (google “emotion charts for kids”) can be useful tools, as can describing what you're seeing (“you're frowning a lot right now”, or “your tone is off”). Help them to discover the answer for themselves.

Go over this week's challenges together. While folks are on their own to complete them, consider inviting them to email you with how it went sometime in the next week or so. Highlight the additional devotionals to your group participants included at the end of the lesson. Answer any questions and dismiss.

CHALLENGE

1. This week, spend some extra time in prayer going over this lesson. Seek insight and direction from the Lord before you act.
2. Begin crafting an intentional plan for your child(ren). Remember to cycle through vision, connection, bravery, consistency and boldly shine for yourself as a parent and for your child(ren).
3. Pick one outside resource on parenting to grow your skills and get it.
4. Extend yourself grace! Remember, perfection doesn't guarantee outcome. Hold onto Jesus' words in John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. [Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge.]” (AMP).

Congratulations! You have successfully led your group through week 10!

Weekly Devotional: Create space to read the following short devotionals throughout the week to enhance your growing experience.

DEVOTIONAL 1:

Parenting with Purpose

One of my favorite parenting scriptures is found in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 which says, “Make the things I’m commanding you today part of who you are. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you’re sitting together in your home and when you’re walking together down the road. Make them the last thing you talk about before you go to bed and the first thing you talk about the next morning.”

In other words, parenting in faith is a lifestyle. Far from preaching at a child, this verse implies a natural insertion into how you live together as a family. While kids are rarely interested in some moralistic lecture, there are easy ways to share naturally about faith in your home.

With young children, fun family devotionals about bible stories are an easy way to instill God’s word into the heart of your family. Sing fun bible songs. Re-enact bible stories as a skit, a play or with stuffed animals. Keep the message simple by wrapping up with one concept (Jesus loves us, or God protects us, or we can trust God). Then, as you go about your day together, point out simple ways you see those principles in action.

Example: See that baby bird being fed by its parent? God feeds us and helps us just like that baby bird.

Example: You did such a good job holding onto my hand in the store! I know God is proud of your hard work, as am I.

As children get older, your focus shifts. While more age-appropriate devotionals are still appropriate, I have found sharing about what I’m learning personally to be a very effective tool. When we leave church, for example, I share what the message meant to me personally to model a thoughtful answer. Then I ask what each person got out of the message. If the answer is superficial, I nudge them to go deeper. To this day, my adult children and I engage in this way about church, bible studies, and personal biblical studies.

Your goal is to help your child(ren) develop his or her own walk with the Lord. Do devotionals together. Allot time in your family rhythm for group or personal bible study. Share in a way that’s relatable versus preachy. Ultimately, it will be each child’s choice whether to engage meaningfully with God. Your job is to give them the best chance of success.

Note: If you have a wide age span between oldest and youngest, ask your older children to help create devotionals for the younger ones. It's a fun, easy way to engage them in the action while also surreptitiously engaging them in the word. If the older ones aren't interested, don't require them to join in devotionals with your young ones. Instead, stick to sharing about what you're learning personally. Even if they act disinterested, trust me. It does sink in!

Action Point:

Reflect on some new ways you can begin to incorporate faith in your home. Write down your thoughts, ideas, or commitments to implement these changes.

Remember, parenting in faith is a lifestyle, and each intentional step you take can have a lasting impact on your family's spiritual growth. Take a step of faith and implement one of your reflection points.

DEVOTIONAL 2:

Setting Boundaries with Love

In the book of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul's main theme is unity. Not only does unity matter in Christ's body, the church, but also in our families. Learning to successfully implement boundaries helps your family stay unified and on the same page.

A key scripture is found in Ephesians 6:11, 16 which says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil... In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one."

As parents, we're called to set healthy boundaries for our children out of love. Just as the shield of faith protects us from the enemy's attacks, establishing boundaries shields our children from harm and guides them towards growth. It also helps everyone to understand their roles within the family dynamic.

Spend a moment to prayerfully consider the boundaries you may need to set, trusting in God's guidance and wisdom. Identify one area where you need to establish or reinforce boundaries with your children and explore what that might look like on a day-to-day basis in your unique situation. Take some time to write down your reflections and insights here.

Pray for wisdom and courage to implement what you've landed on lovingly yet firmly.

DEVOTIONAL 3:

Modeling Growth and Healing

In Philippians 4:8, we are told, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Reflection:

Our journey towards healing and growth not only impacts us but also influences our children. Just as we strive to model positive behaviors and attitudes, we sow seeds of transformation in their lives. Let's intentionally cultivate an atmosphere of love, grace, and growth within our families, reflecting God's goodness and grace.

With that in mind, reflect on how your actions and attitudes influence your children's perception of growth and healing here:

How might you grow in modeling a positive attitude in your home?

Consider one practical way you can model positive behavior and share it with your family. Then pray to consistently implement it.

Concluding Thoughts For Leaders

As we bid farewell to our Boldly Shine class journey, I want to extend a sincere thank you once again for your dedication and commitment as the facilitator and leader. Your efforts have undoubtedly made a profound impact on those you've guided through this transformative experience.

As you transition from this chapter, remember that ongoing support and resources are available to you. Explore the Host Hub for additional tools and materials, visit the Dented Fender Ministry blog for continued inspiration, and stay connected with our community through the Leader's Facebook group for ongoing encouragement and support.

Your contributions have not gone unnoticed, and your dedication to helping others turn from brokenness to boldly shining for Jesus is truly commendable. Thank you for being an integral part of the Boldly Shine community.

Here's to celebrating your accomplishments, acknowledging the hurdles you've overcome, and honoring the positive impact you've had on others. You are truly an integral part of the Boldly Shine community, and for that, we are immensely grateful.

"Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, my friend, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people." - Philemon 7

With blessings,

Barb Lownsbury

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES



Using What's Broken to Boldly Shine Facilitator Guide

©2024 Barbara Lownsbury

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any fashion, print facsimile, digital or electronic, or by any method yet to be developed, without the express permission by the copyright holder.