

DISCOVER  
THE DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE FROM SCRIPTURE UNION

QUARTERLY  
JAN | FEB | MAR | 2012

*Group  
Discussion  
Guide*

*Extra*

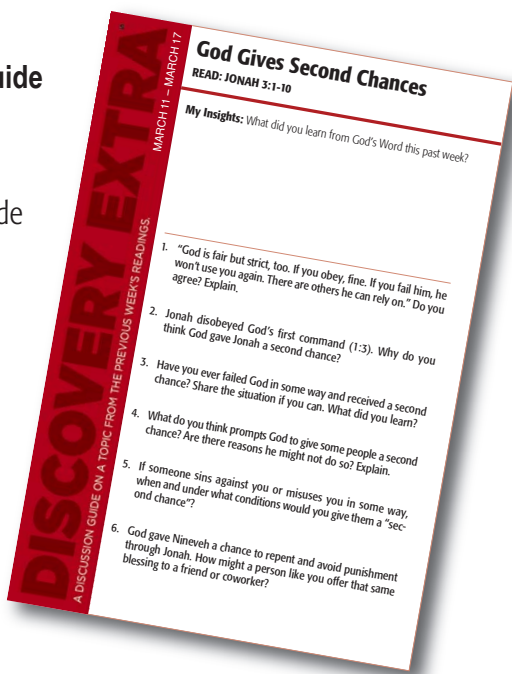
A SCRIPTURE UNION BIBLE READING PUBLICATION



# How to Use the *DiscoveryExtra* Discussion Guide

The **DiscoveryExtra** Discussion Guide is a companion to Scripture Union's **Discovery** daily Bible reading guide, published quarterly. The Discussion Guide features a set of questions based on a topic arising from the previous week's readings. It enables a small group or Sunday School class to share personal insights from their readings in God's Word that week and then discuss the topic, using the suggested questions.

Each week's **DiscoveryExtra** discussion page will look like this:



To get the most from your discussion time, just follow these 5 simple steps:

- ▶ **Prepare** to read and discuss God's Word. That may include worship and/or prayer.
- ▶ **Share** insights each has gained from the past week's readings.
- ▶ **Read** the passage chosen for your group's discussion this week.
- ▶ **Discuss** the passage, using the discussion questions as a guide.
- ▶ **Pray** about what you've learned from God's Word. You may use the Prayer Journal on the inside back cover of the **Discovery** daily Bible Reading Guide for personal prayer reminders.

## The Original Evil

READ: GENESIS 3:1-24

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "Sure, there are a few people who seem bent on evil but people are basically good. I don't believe in any inherent tendency to do wrong or sin." Do you agree? Explain.
2. What would you say was the essence of the temptation that Adam and Eve faced? Have you faced any temptation like that?
3. What are the strongest temptations that you and people you know face today? What are the strongest that Christians face?
4. How do you deal with and overcome or attempt to overcome the temptations you face daily? How successful are you? Explain your answer.
5. This sin had terrible, lasting consequences. What are some of the worst consequences of sin you see today? How do you feel about the sins you see that seem to have none?
6. How would you define or explain sin to a non-believer? What would you say to someone who seemed to take lightly the clear commands of God?

# Taking Care of Business

READ: GENESIS 9:1-29

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "Animals, plants, fish, mountains; they all share in the divine essence and must therefore be given proper dignity and care." Do you agree? Explain.
2. How does God explain the unique value of human life here? How does it make you feel?
3. God told Noah to "be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (1). How does this passage relate, if at all, to the fears of over-population?
4. God established his covenant with Noah and with "every living creature". How does this affect your attitudes regarding "creation care"? What should Christians do or do more of in this area?
5. God gave Noah every living creature for food (3) but made his covenant with them, too (9). How do you answer those who say we shouldn't kill or eat any "living creature" made by God?
6. What do you think is your specific responsibility for caring for God's creation—both animate and inanimate? What's the basis for your decision?

## “Sorry” Isn’t Always Enough

READ: LUKE 3:1-20

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “I said I was really sorry I did that. Isn’t that enough? What more do you want?” How would you reply to this person?
2. What do you think it means to “repent”? Is it more than being (truly) “sorry”? Explain.
3. Is a specific action or actions usually a part of real repentance? If so, explain why. Give a specific example of how you or someone you know repented in such a way.
4. What might be some specific “fruits of repentance” in a situation you know of?
5. How might John’s idea of repentance differ from the way most people (and even other Christians) understand repentance?
6. If someone hurt or misused you and asked “How can I show how sorry I am?”, what might you say to them?

# Friends Helping Friends

READ: LUKE 5:17-26

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I have a lot of friends outside the church but I don't think any of them are interested in Jesus so it's best just to leave them alone until God brings them around." Do you agree? Explain.
2. These men brought their friend to Jesus. What are some effective ways that you've heard of or tried for introducing friends to Jesus?
3. How effective do you think most Christians you know are at bringing friends to Jesus? How could they be more effective? Explain your answers.
4. Have you ever tried introducing a friend to Jesus? What obstacles did you face? How did you or should you have dealt with them?
5. The man in this story needed healing and forgiveness. What do your friends need (or think they need) that Jesus could give them? Is there a part you could play in that?
6. How does your church help you prepare to bring friends to Jesus? How can it be more helpful?

## There Goes the Judge

READ: LUKE 6:37-42 AND ALSO MATTHEW 7:1-6

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "His sin is between him and God. It's none of my business." If someone said this about a fellow believer, would you agree? Explain why or why not.
2. We have to make judgments about people's attitudes and actions every day. So what do you think Jesus meant by "do not judge, and you will not be judged" (37)?
3. How would you describe the general attitude Jesus commends here? Is it practical today? Realistic?
4. Have you had an experience with "judging" another or being "judged"? If so, share the experience, and tell what you did and learned.
5. How does one "take the plank out of your eye" (42) and be certain of doing it before pointing out the sin of another? Have you done it?
6. To what benefit(s) do you think Jesus is referring in verse 39? Have you experienced that benefit? If so, share.

# Who Did You Expect?

READ: LUKE 7:18-35

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I'm wrestling with belief in Jesus right now. I wonder if he really is God's divine Son. How can I be sure?" What would you say to this person?
2. John's disciples reported all that Jesus did but John still wasn't sure about Jesus (18,19). Why do you think that was? What did he expect?
3. John and his disciples obviously had doubts about Jesus. Have you had any doubts? If so, what are/were they and what may have caused them?
4. What do you expect to see, receive or experience from Jesus? Have you had any of it come to you? Explain.
5. What signs or evidence of Jesus' activity in the world do you want and expect to see? Why?
6. How would you defend your belief in Jesus to an open non-believer? Have you ever done it? If so, share.

# Eat, Drink and Be...?

READ: ISAIAH 55:1-13

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I always have this uneasy, empty feeling inside. I don't know why and I don't know what to do about it." If a non-believing friend said this, how would you reply?
2. Do you know people who are spiritually "thirsty"? What is the evidence? What are they thirsting for?
3. Can you give examples from your experience or that of people you know of spending money and effort on "what does not satisfy" (2)?
4. How have you experienced your relationship with God as "the richest of fare" (2)? What more are you hoping for?
5. Isaiah says to "seek the Lord while he may be found" (6). When would you say that is? Is there a time God is not able to be found?
6. What would you tell a person to do who is spiritually thirsty and seeking the Lord? How should they begin?

# Keeping Clean In a Dirty World

READ: 2 SAMUEL 11:1-27 AND ALSO JAMES 4:7-10

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "I consider myself a strong Christian so I don't worry about temptation. If it comes my way, I can deal with it." What would you say to this person?
2. What do you think was David's first mistake here (leading to his adultery and murder)? Explain.
3. What would you say are the 2-3 most prevalent and dangerous sexual temptations that we face? What evidence can you cite to support your answer?
4. How can a person avoid or resist the many sexual temptations facing us each day? What steps or precautions would you recommend (or do you practice)?
5. A "cover up" is a common response to the realization of one's sin. Have you seen it happen and seen serious consequences result? If so, share.
6. What can a person like you and a church like yours do to help reduce sexual temptation and help people resist it?

## An Appeal God Hears

READ: PSALM 51:1-19

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "He did a terrible, terrible thing. Sure, he says he's sorry, but I don't think God can ever forgive him for that." Do you agree? How would you respond?
2. What 2-3 words or phrases would you use to describe David's attitude here?
3. What would you say is the key to making a plea for mercy to God? Have you ever made such a plea? If so, what did you learn or experience?
4. What might prevent a person who knows their sin from making such a heartfelt plea for mercy? Have you seen it happen?
5. When David had sinned against both Bathsheba and her husband, why do you think he said to the Lord "against you, you only, have I sinned"(4)?
6. What assurance do you have (or give to another) that when you plead with God for mercy, God will grant it?

# Famous Last Words

READ: 2 SAMUEL 23:1-7

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "All this fuss about last words—I don't understand it. They don't mean much. It's your life before them that counts." Do you agree? Explain.
2. How would you characterize the tone of these "last words" of David? Do they strike you as unusual in any way?
3. Would you say "last words" should be important to Christians? If so, say why and what you think they should be like.
4. Have you heard or heard of any especially appropriate or moving "last words" from a Christian? If so, explain why they impressed you.
5. What role or function can and should "last words" play in the life of a Christian and his or her family? Why do you think they seem to be so neglected today?
6. What do you want your "last words" to say or be remembered for? How can you prepare for them now?

## God Gives Second Chances

READ: JONAH 3:1-10

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God's Word this past week?

1. "God is fair but strict, too. If you obey, fine. If you fail him, he won't use you again. There are others he can rely on." Do you agree? Explain.
2. Jonah disobeyed God's first command (1:3). Why do you think God gave Jonah a second chance?
3. Have you ever failed God in some way and received a second chance? Share the situation if you can. What did you learn?
4. What do you think prompts God to give some people a second chance? Are there reasons he might not do so? Explain.
5. If someone sins against you or misuses you in some way, when and under what conditions would you give them a "second chance"?
6. God gave Nineveh a chance to repent and avoid punishment through Jonah. How might a person like you offer that same blessing to a friend or coworker?

# Commerce or Worship?

READ: LUKE 19:45–20:8 AND ALSO MATTHEW 21:12,13

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “We have bake sales and a church fair to support our missions program. I can’t see anything wrong with them. Do you?” How would you respond? Explain.
2. Why do you think Jesus was so upset about the buying and selling in the temple area?
3. What do you see as the dangers, if any, to a church—and perhaps to your church—of having commercial activity going on in the church building or on church property? Explain.
4. What do you think are the guidelines to follow when having any “buying and selling” in or around the church property and sanctuary? Explain why you say that.
5. Some churches have bookstores and cafes on site. If your church has something like that, how do you feel about it? Is there anything you’d change? If so, why.
6. How could your church be even more a “house of prayer”? What would you add or change?

## “All They Talk About Is...”

READ: LUKE 20:41–21:4 AND ALSO 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-15

**My Insights:** What did you learn from God’s Word this past week?

1. “I don’t understand why the church is always talking about money and giving. There must be many things more important to talk about.” How would you help this person?
2. What do you think Jesus meant by saying that this woman had given more than the others, including rich people? What does this tell you about giving in general and your giving?
3. Why did Jesus commend this woman? What do you think enabled her to give this way?
4. What should guide a Christian in giving to the Lord? What guides your giving?
5. What connection do you see between one’s giving and one’s spiritual life and growth? Have you experienced that connection in any way? If so, explain.
6. What difference do you think it would make if more Christians gave to the church the way this woman did? What do you think keeps that from happening?

# Notes

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