

# COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

For the week of March 20, 2022

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

→ **CHURCH WIDE GO DAY – March 26, 9-12pm and 1-4pm.** This will be a great opportunity for the entire family to serve in cleaning up the Amazing Love property, building projects, fixing and repairing, as well as feeding the homeless community from our GO Team food trailer. Register here: <https://stfchurch.com/missions/>

→ **MARRIED LIFE ESCAPE ROOM DATE NIGHT - MARCH 26 5:45-8:30pm** Choose from three adventures and see if your team can Register escape in time! Dinner will be provided afterward. The cost is \$40 and that includes the escape room admission and dinner. Register here: <https://stfchurch.com/marriedlife/>

→ **WOMEN'S GATHERING** Spring Women's Conference – April 1-2, at the Ballast Point Campus. "The Women of the Bible Speak" on Friday and Saturday, April 1 – 2! We are thrilled to have Shannon Bream, anchor of Fox News@Night and Chief Legal Correspondent for the Fox News Channel, Leanna Crawford, a Nashville singer-songwriter, and our own worship leader Shannon Estee.

The conference kicks off Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Ballast Point Campus and concludes Saturday at 1:00 p.m. Tickets are \$49 (\$20 for high school/college students), which includes lunch on Saturday.

visit <https://stfchurch.com/women/> to register.

## QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## MY STORY

1. Can you think of a "legend," dead or alive, who brought "heaven to earth"?
2. Does your world look more like heaven because you're in it? What needs to change if not?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. The Israelites had a history of God going before them. What do you notice in the following verses about what happened when God went before His people?

### **Exodus 13:21-22 New International Version (NIV)**

*<sup>21</sup> By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.*

### **Deuteronomy 1:29-33 New International Version (NIV)**

*<sup>29</sup> Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. <sup>30</sup> The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, <sup>31</sup> and in the wilderness. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place." <sup>32</sup> In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God, <sup>33</sup> who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.*

**Deuteronomy 31:7-8 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>7</sup> Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. <sup>8</sup> The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

**Psalms 77:16-20 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup> The waters saw you, God,  
the waters saw you and writhed;  
the very depths were convulsed.  
<sup>17</sup> The clouds poured down water,  
the heavens resounded with thunder;  
your arrows flashed back and forth.  
<sup>18</sup> Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,  
your lightning lit up the world;  
the earth trembled and quaked.  
<sup>19</sup> Your path led through the sea,  
your way through the mighty waters,  
though your footprints were not seen.  
<sup>20</sup> You led your people like a flock  
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Despite being told the Lord goes before them, it seems it takes courage, strength and assurance for followers of God to trust and let God lead. What do you learn about the role and responsibility of the follower in the passages you just read?

When is it hardest for you to take on this role of the follower and trust that God is out in front of you?

How do we have courage and better trust God to go ahead of us?

2. Scripture makes it clear that partial obedience is disobedience. An example of this is Saul in 1 Samuel 15:1-26. What do you learn about compromise, good intentions and God in these verses?

**1 Samuel 15:1-26 New International Version (NIV)**

Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. <sup>2</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. <sup>3</sup> Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"

<sup>4</sup> So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand from Judah. <sup>5</sup> Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. <sup>6</sup> Then he said to the Kenites, "Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

<sup>7</sup> Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. <sup>8</sup> He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. <sup>9</sup> But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

<sup>10</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: <sup>11</sup> "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.

<sup>12</sup> Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal."

<sup>13</sup> When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions."

<sup>14</sup> But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

<sup>15</sup> Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

<sup>16</sup> "Enough!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night."  
"Tell me," Saul replied.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. <sup>18</sup> And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.' <sup>19</sup> Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?"

<sup>20</sup> "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. <sup>21</sup> The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

<sup>22</sup> But Samuel replied:  
"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices  
as much as in obeying the LORD?  
To obey is better than sacrifice,  
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.  
<sup>23</sup> For rebellion is like the sin of divination,  
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.  
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,  
he has rejected you as king."

<sup>24</sup> Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. <sup>25</sup> Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

<sup>26</sup> But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!"

In what ways do we try to justify our actions like Saul does in this chapter?

Let's be honest. We can often fall into the trap of thinking, like Saul, that if we are obeying God in most areas of our lives, we are doing well. Why do you think this is such a common misassumption Christians struggle with?

Can you think of any dangers or consequences of thinking like this?

Though we are called to obedience, we also know our sinful nature keeps us from being perfect on this side of Heaven. How does Romans 7:15-25 help you understand the difference between obedience and perfection?

**Romans 7:15-25 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to

*death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

## TAKING IT HOME

1. To clearly follow God and know He is ahead of you involves being obedient to what you've already been told to do. Is there an area of obedience you would like prayer for from your Community Group?
  
2. Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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