

# Sermon Discussion Guide

## Releasing the Power of God's Word in Your Life

*"We also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe."* 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)

The effectiveness of God's Word in our lives is up to us. Each day we make choices about how we will spend our time (will we spend some time reading our bible, taking time to ponder what it says?), what we believe (it is a choice based on relationship), what to declare as truth (repeating God's Word out loud), and what we will do (what the Word says). Our faith releases the power of God's word in our lives. How do we combine the Word of God with faith? Let's Talk It Over.

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.**

*"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you . . . I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."* Psalm 119:11, 16 (NIV)

1. Without having the word in our heart, what defense do we have against sin? God wants to speak to us every day. If we are to use whatever time we have, how much time are you willing to devote daily to accomplish this?

*"I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws."* Psalm 119:30 (NIV)

2. Since faith is a choice, what have you chosen to believe? Was there a time when you were not a believer? When did you start believing in the truth of God? How can you make your faith stronger?

*"He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*  
Matthew 17:20 (NIV)

3. As a group, read the passage above aloud slowly. Do you have any mountains in your life that need to be moved? What is God's invitation to Christians in the passage? What impact does knowing "nothing will be impossible for you" have on your faith? On your daily interaction with Jesus? On the desire to speak God's Word into the stormy situations in your life?

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

4. Why is a strong faith foundation important in today's world? What makes it so difficult to act on God's Word? List some of the ways a believer can improve on building their foundation on God's Word. Once the list is complete, ask each group member to describe what steps they might need to take to grow in this area.

### **Diving Deeper (optional)**

1. When you say what God says, you begin to think like God thinks. Write down truths about God or about how much he loves his children that speak to you in difficult moments or seasons. What stands out to you about those truths? What threatens to take your attention away from these truths?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13 above. When you act on God's Word, God's Word acts on you. Allowing the light of the Word to penetrate the darkness in our lives brings light, clarity and direction to our lives. It also shows us our sin. What step do you need to take today? Confess your sin? Follow God's light to a more fruitful life? Change directions? Write it down and spend some time with God, asking him to direct your life anew. Put his plan into action. What's your next step?

**REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.**



## Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

### Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- Share a time in your life when you were flourishing. What did you believe to be true about those circumstances?
- Understanding that combining the Word of God with faith releases God’s power in our lives.
- Pray: Heavenly Father, we know your Word is truth. As we read it this week, let us declare your promises out loud. May our actions show the world that we believe in you and in your Word as we build a future that will withstand the storms of life. May our lives be a beacon of hope to a world that needs you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

### Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

### Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.