



W HOLE HEARTED

*Finding spiritual health
and emotional maturity.*

Small Group Discussion Guide



PREPARATION

❏ **STUDY**

Spend the week studying 1 Samuel 17 and Luke 4:1–13. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

❏ **PRAY**

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

❏ **LANDING POINT**

In order to know God, I need to know myself.



GROUP DISCUSSION

❏ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

❏ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

❏ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

❏ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

GOD'S UNIQUE DESIGN

God is creative. He has made each of with our own unique design. And God wants us to live according to His design. But too often we let others' desires, opinions and expectations hijack what God intends for our lives.

John Calvin once wrote that wisdom is made up of two parts: knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves.¹ But self-knowledge is not easily attained in a world full of competing voices about who you are or should be. Sadly, too many people spend their whole lives never knowing who they truly are.

Q: *What keeps someone from discovering their true self?*



BIBLE

Select 2–3 questions to discuss as a group.

TWO CASE STUDIES

David the Shepherd

It's the day of the famous showdown between the giant Philistine, Goliath, and the young shepherd, David. King Saul wants David fully prepared for battle, so he gives him his armor. After all, that's what warriors wear. But the armor doesn't fit, and honestly, it isn't true to who David is. David would, instead, stand in battle and fight Goliath based on who God made him to be—not what everyone else, including the king, expected of him.

READ: *1 Samuel 17:26–45. Share about a time when someone tried to “fit” you into their plans or expectations.*

Jesus the Son

The baptism and temptation of Jesus show us how He lived as His true, authentic self. At His baptism, heaven opens up, the Spirit comes down in the form of a dove and the Father's voice declares for all to hear, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Jesus hasn't done anything yet. No teaching. No miracles. No cross. What matters is that He is deeply loved by the Father and *that* is the basis of His self-understanding and feelings about Himself.

After his baptism, Jesus goes into the desert for forty days and is tempted by Satan. There Satan threatens Jesus' sense of self and trust in God's love through three temptations:

- I am what I do (Performance).
- I am what I have (Possessions).
- I am what others think (Popularity).

🗨️: *How is experiencing the Father's love the greatest defense against being your false self?*

🗨️: *Which of the three temptations are you most vulnerable to? Why?*



REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

Select 2–3 questions from this section to answer.

PERMISSION TO FEEL

God can use our feelings to communicate something to us. He designed us to feel a wide range of emotions. As God's image-bearers, we feel because He feels. When we deny our feelings or try to suppress them, we're being less than the human God created us to be. "The journey of genuine transformation to emotionally healthy spirituality begins with a commitment to allow yourself to feel."²

Q: Name the two to three strongest emotions you have felt in the past month (see commentary for a list of emotions).

STEPS TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

To live as your true self, you will have to:

- Pay attention to and deal with your emotions.
- Be OK with disappointing people.
- Differentiate between yourself and others.

Here are four truths to help you discover your true self in Christ:

- Practice silence and solitude with God.
- Find trusted friends.
- Get out of your comfort zone.
- Pray for courage.

Q: Why is it important to name your emotions and know where they come from?

Q: What's one practical thing you will do this week to try and discover your true self?

Q: How can the group pray for you now and in the week ahead?



WIDE RANGE OF EMOTIONS Every human experiences hundreds of emotions. Those emotions can be classified into eight main categories:

- Anger (fury, hostility, irritability, annoyance)
- Sadness (grief, self-pity, despair, dejection, loneliness)
- Fear (anxiety, edginess, nervousness, fright, terror, apprehension)
- Enjoyment (joy, relief, contentment, delight, thrill, euphoria, ecstasy)
- Love (acceptance, trust, devotion, adoration)
- Surprise (shock, amazement, wonder)
- Disgust (contempt, scorn, aversion, distaste, revulsion)
- Shame (guilt, remorse, humiliation, embarrassment, chagrin)³

DAVID'S CONFIDENCE “David has great confidence because the Lord is with him and will fight for him”⁴ (see 1 Sam. 16:18). David understood his true self but did not believe that he alone could defeat Goliath. He needed to trust God to deliver him.

GOD'S PREPARATION “Testing people who minister for Him is God’s way of preparing them to minister. He wants to give them experience in relying on Scripture and experiencing Him rather than on human qualifications, methods, and abilities.”⁵ Like Jesus, God tests us to prove our faith. These tests help build a character that finds true identity in God, not our power, performance or popularity.

ENDNOTES:

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion & 2*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1, *The Library of Christian Classics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 35.
2. Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature*, updated ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017), 44–45.
3. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 199–200.
4. D. A. Carson, ed., *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 521.
5. Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, vol. 3, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 60.