



KINGDOM MAN

Small Group Teaching Guide
JULY 2, 2017



PREPARATION

STUDY

Spend the week studying 2 Corinthians 11:16-12: 10 and John 21:15-19. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

DETERMINE

Which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.

PRAY

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

LANDING POINT

God sees potential in every man to have true G.R.I.T.



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.

This week your group will discuss how to be a man of G.R.I.T. (Grace + Reliance = Internal Toughness). God's special project for every man is to shape him more into the image of His Son. Like a master craftsman, He makes the rough patches of our character smoother through life's experiences and our relationship with Him and others. As God shapes us, He empowers us to serve His purposes. "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him."¹

Q: How would you describe someone with G.R.I.T.? Do you know anyone who embodies this well?

Q: Recall a situation when God used an experience or relationship to shape your character. What did you learn?



LEARN

Select 1-2 questions from this section to answer.

PAUL'S GRIT

Paul was a man whose life was defined by G.R.I.T. His missionary journeys chronicled in Acts and New Testament letters reveal a man with "courage and determination."² On one occasion, Paul recounts to his readers in Corinth how he has suffered for Clu·ist's name. Consider his catalog of hardships: five times he received thirty-nine lashes, three times he was beaten with rods, he was stoned, tlu·ee times he was shipwrecked, and he was imprisoned and came close to death multiple times. At nearly every turn, Paul faced danger on all sides. On top of all this, the responsibilities and pressure of church planting kept the apostle up many nights, anxious for those believers. Paul was no fair-weather Christian. He exemplified the type of grit that comes from God.

READ: Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. What was Paul's purpose in listing these sufferings?

Q: How can suffering strengthen our faith?

PAUL'S THORN

Now, Paul doesn't give this account to brag. He does it to prove a point. Paul's weakness and suffering shows God's power and grace at work in him. To him, this is true G.R.I.T. A fool boasts in himself, but Paul is putting his weakness on full display to show God's power at work.

Later, Paul mentions a "thorn in the flesh" that hinders his work. We don't know what this "thorn" is exactly, but we know that Paul prayed three times for God to take it away. Each time, Paul says, God responded, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."³ This "thorn" was given to teach Paul humility and that following Jesus requires taking up our own cross. To walk as Jesus walked we need G.R.I.T.

READ: Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. What "thorns" have you experienced in life?

Q: Explain the following statement in your own words: "Paul is putting his weakness on full display to show God's power at work."



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

What does Paul teach us about true G.R.I.T? Let's break down this acronym and consider how God develops G.R.I.T. in men who follow Him.

G.+ R. = I.T.

Q: What causes men to falter when faced with the tough stuff in life? Give examples.

GRACE

When a man understands the grace of God, his life starts to change. Love is the root of grace. God's love compels Him to act graciously and mercifully towards us. Even in the face of sin and rebellion, the heart of the Father is to win men and women back to Him. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be able to comprehend the length and height and depth of God's love for them in Jesus Christ.⁴ In the Greek, comprehend means to "grasp, lay hold of."⁵ It also means "to make something one's own."⁶ A real man is defined by grace; it's the defining feature of his life. It's what moves him to love instead of hate, serve someone's needs before his own, and seek the good of others.

Q: What's one thing you can do this week to make you more aware of God's grace?

RELIANCE

Men with G.R.I.T. see how desperately they need God. He gives them the wisdom and direction to lead a life of purpose. Without God, they are hopeless and listless. In our culture today, countless men define their manhood by three things: the bedroom (sexual conquest), the boardroom (career advancement and power) or the billfold (financial success). What these men come to discover is that their pursuits leave them empty. Men with G.R.I.T. rely on God's wisdom and direction in life. This puts them on a path to do something with their life that will outlive them.

Q: Consider the three things that define manhood in our culture: the bedroom, the boardroom, and the billfold. Have you ever felt compelled to define yourself by any of these things?

INTERNAL TOUGHNESS

When a man understands God's grace and his need for God, he develops internal toughness. Whether life is

smooth sailing or stormy and threatening, this man is not shaken. We see this in Paul, who endured so much for Christ. Our ultimate model of internal toughness is Jesus, who never turned away from obeying God's purposes. Right before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus told the Father, "not my will, but yours, be done."⁷ In Jesus, we see that "the greatness of a man is in direct proportion to the measure of his surrender."⁸ His toughness isn't measured by how much he can bench press or whether he can outlast someone in negotiations. It is measured by the cross and his surrender to · God's will.

Q: How do you think that developing internal toughness would impact your life and perspective?



LEAD

Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.

JESUS AND PETER

Today, it's easy for us to doubt that God sees potential in us. We wonder whether we could actually have true G.R.I.T. Maybe we've messed up in the past and the enemy haunts us with memories of our sins. Maybe we've failed in our marriage or a business venture. Maybe we lack strong male influences in our lives. Whatever the reason, we doubt that we have what it takes to be the man God has called us to be.

Peter had these kinds of doubts. After Jesus' arrest, he denied the Lord three times. This betrayal broke Peter's heart. How could he deny the man he left everything to follow? After Jesus' death, Peter must have thought he had disqualified himself and might as well go back to being a fisherman. But then, Peter meets the resurrected Jesus by the Sea of Tiberias. Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Each time Peter responds,

"Yes, you know I love you," and each time Jesus tells him, "Then feed my sheep." Even though Peter had failed, because Jesus loved him, he wouldn't give up on the disciple. Peter would go on to become one of the prominent leaders in the early Church. His life was dedicated to following Jesus' command and sharing the good news of God's grace. Like Peter, God doesn't give up on you. He has a significant role for you to play in His kingdom, and loving Jesus qualifies you for the job.

Q: Read John 21:15-19. What stands out to you in this passage?

Q: How does Peter's story encourage you concerning what God can do in and through you?



PRAY

This week, focus your prayer on asking God to make you someone with G.R.I.T. Ask God to reveal things that may be holding you back. Finish by praising God for His love and grace, which empowers you to serve Him.



FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- Read Ephesians 3:18-19 and reflect on Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and what it says about God's grace.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their lives.



COMMENTARY

WAS PAUL BOASTING? In 2 Corinthians 11: 16-33..,Paul is using a literary technique to prove a contrary point. In actuality, he wasn't boasting. His "accomplishments" would have been seen as apparent defeats in the eyes of many. Paul wanted to show God's grace and power at work through his weakness.

GRACE DEFINED The Hebrew term chesed means "grace, mercy, steadfast love, compassion." The Greek term charis means "grace, favor, graciousness, goodwill." Grace is "gracious or merciful behavior of a more powerful person toward another."⁹ We see it in the Old Testament and how God heard the cries of the Israelites in Egypt and rescued them. Even when the Israelites rebelled against Him, God took initiative to do something to bring them back to Him and sent Jesus. In Christ, we see God's grace in the flesh. Scripture tells us that when Jesus looked out at a large crowd, He "had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). And it was this compassion that led Jesus to the cross.

WHAT ABOUT THAT VISION? Paul uses the third person when recalling an episode when he received a vision from God. “Paradise” would have been understood by his readers as a place of blessedness where one encounters God’s direct presence. 10

PAUL’S “THORN IN THE FLESH”

Debate surrounds the “thorn” or “messenger” which Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Some think this refers to internal psychosocial struggles, while others think it is Paul’s opponents, who persecute him. Some think it might be a physical issue like bad eyesight or illness. Others think the “thorn” or “messenger” is referring to a form of demoic opposition.

ENDNOTES

1. *Philippians 2:13 (NL T).*
2. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
3. *2 Corinthians 12:9.*
4. *Ephesians 3:18-19.*
5. William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 519.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Luke 22:42.*
8. Quote by William Booth (1829-1916), founder of the Salvation Army.
9. A. Boyd Luter, “Grace,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).
10. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2238.