

SHADOW CHRISTIANS

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Chapter 1: LIFE IN THE SHADOWS

- Since the Bible is inspired, what it includes and excludes are both important. Why do you think the accomplishments of some people are included in the Bible, but their names are omitted? Discuss insights with your small group.
- Do you have a favorite anonymous person in the Bible? What did they do? Why does their story resonate with you? Share your insights and discuss them with your group.
- Who is a shadow Christian who has impacted your life in a positive way? What did you learn from them? What can you learn from their example of serving in the shadows? Share these stories with your group.

Chapter 2: GOD KNOWS US INTIMATELY

- Intimacy is a scary word for some people. What does it mean to you? Does the idea of intimacy with God make you uncomfortable? Discuss with your group reasons we are reluctant to experience intimacy with God.
- Ask your group to create a list of ways to serve Jesus without expecting anything in return. Choose at least one way to serve without getting anything in return, and do it this week.

Chapter 3: GOD LOVES US TENDERLY

- Do you struggle with envisioning God as a loving Father? Why do you struggle with receiving God's love? Discuss with your group how our performance-based culture has infiltrated and marred our understanding of the Christian life.
- Jesus was indignant with his followers for prohibiting children from coming to him. Why did this make Jesus angry? What does his response teach you about the value of children and children's ministry today? Discuss what this means for your church.
- What does it mean to become childlike in order to enter the kingdom of God? Why does this keep some people from becoming Christians? Discuss your insights with your group.

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Chapter 4: GOD VALUES US HIGHLY

- What does “theology informs practice” mean? Why is it important to base what we think and do on sound theology? Share with your group one way you do this well and one way you can improve.
- Besides the four theological convictions outlined in this chapter (priesthood of the believer, giftedness of believers, nature of the church, focus of leaders), can you identify additional theological concepts that support the crucial role of shadow Christians? Discuss your observations with your group.
- As you prepare for the next chapter, do you think any person can experience God’s power? If so, why is this true? If not, why not? Discuss these ideas with your group and pray together for continued insight from this study.

Chapter 5: WE EXPERIENCE GOD’S POWER

- Why do some believers doubt God’s power is available to them? How do you deal with those feelings? Discuss with your group ways to overcome these feelings of inadequacy.
- How can you humble yourself as part of experiencing God’s power? Discuss these ideas with your group and pray for one another to develop true humility.

Chapter 6: WE SHARE THE GOSPEL

- Why is sharing the gospel so spiritually satisfying to believers? Ask someone in the group to tell a story of leading another person to faith in Jesus and how it impacted them spiritually.
- Read John 4:1-42 and Mark 2:1-12. What demonstrates intentionality in connecting people to Jesus? What demonstrates urgency? What demonstrates focus? Discuss with your group ways you can be more intentional, urgent, and focused on sharing the gospel.

Chapter 7: WE ARE THE MINISTRY WORKFORCE

- Read Luke 10:1-12. Why did Jesus choose anonymous workers and send them out to expand his kingdom? How did this establish a pattern for today? Discuss with your group how to apply this pattern in your ministry setting.
- Read Matthew 25:14-30. What does this story teach you about leadership roles in God’s kingdom? Share your insights and discuss them with your group. roles in God’s kingdom? Share your insights and discuss them with your group. people to Jesus? What demonstrates urgency? What demonstrates focus? Discuss with your group ways you can be more intentional, urgent, and focused on sharing the gospel.

Chapter 8: WE DO THE DIRTY WORK _____

- Is there any task in your church you consider yourself too good to do or you consider beneath you? If so, why? Volunteer to do that job this week.
- Discuss with your group the challenges faced by top-level leaders in your church—elders, deacons, or other leadership roles. Pray with your small group for the volunteer leaders in your church.

Chapter 9: WE LEAD CHURCHES _____

- Share a story with your group of the positive impact an elder or deacon has had in your life. Celebrate the stories others share.
- What are some ways you can show appreciation for elders and deacons? Choose one way and do it this week. In your group, pray for the elders and deacons of your church. Ask God to raise up future leaders within your church.
- Shadow Christians serve at all levels on the org chart—as workers, mid-level leaders, and senior leaders. Have you found your place to serve? Are you serving well? Pray with your group for the grace to serve faithfully..

Chapter 10: WE START CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES _____

- Why do we focus more on current leaders than founding leaders in churches and ministry organizations? Why are many founders forgotten? How is this a positive development?
- Does someone need to start a new ministry in or through your church? What need would it meet? Are you willing to be on the team to do this? Discuss the possibilities with your group..

Chapter 11: WE FUND CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES _____

- Why is it important to facilitate small gifts from many believers? Why does God work this way rather than just through a few wealthy donors? Discuss your ideas with your group.
- What does the phrase “according to their ability” tell you about the offering by the Antioch church members? How is this similar to offerings in your church? Share your perspective with your group.

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