



REVEAL HIS *story*

5-WEEK SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM

God reveals Himself through story. In the Bible, God reveals Himself through stories of His people; stories of the life, death, and resurrection of His Son; and stories of the presence and power of His Spirit. And God continues to reveal Himself through our stories.

Everyone's story matters. Our whole story matters. Our stories need to be told. Seeing God in our stories gives us – and others around us – strength and hope.

*Retelling how God's **story** has intersected our stories makes our belief in Jesus real to others. We are inviting all groups to embark on this five-week curriculum, guided by our Core Questions. We will ask ourselves these important questions and then turn to ask them of others.*

DESPERATE DEPENDENCE TAKING A RISK
UNEXPECTED JOY INVITING PEOPLE INTO
CONVERSATIONS REVEAL YOUR STORY

#RevealHisStory

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Where are you DESPERATELY DEPENDENT on JESUS?

OUR STORY



Watch Core Questions Video: Introduction

northwestbible.org/story/intro

As we begin this journey together, the first question we will dive into is: “Where are you desperately dependent on Jesus?”

- What do you think or feel when you hear “desperate dependence on Jesus”?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how aware are you of God throughout the day?

DEFINITION *of* DESPERATE DEPENDENCE

To be desperately dependent on Jesus is to acknowledge that only He can provide all that you need. It means that you are willing to submit your own way in exchange for a willingness to take a risk, making every effort to serve and follow Jesus despite the current circumstances. It means that you choose to trust in His character and develop an intolerance for relying on your own solutions. It means that all your hope is in Him, in the promise of your eternal life with Him, and not in what He gives you or does for you here on this earth.

HIS STORY

OLD TESTAMENT

Read Judges 6:33-35; 7:1-7, 15-18

- Imagine what the Israelites felt seeing their enemies so close to their homes. When have you ever felt surrounded by your problems?
- God ensured that He would receive the glory for this battle by removing most of Gideon’s army. When in your life has God removed some provisions, people, or opportunities because He wanted you to be desperately dependent?
- Where in your life have you found yourself desperately depending on God’s presence and power to go before you to accomplish something, as Gideon did in going to battle with only 300 men?
- In the middle of the story, Gideon was reassured through someone else. How has the Lord used others in your life when things seem hopeless?
- Gideon bowed in worship in verse 7:15. Where are you experiencing passionate worship as you live out desperate dependence on Jesus?

old testament COMMENTARY

Gideon was called to deliver his people while threshing wheat secretly for fear of Midianite depredations. He destroyed his father’s Baal altar and Asherah pole in an act of defiance. This gesture of defiance protests the assimilation of the worship of Yahweh with the Baal cult. Judges 7 tells of the deliverance of the people from the Midianites. While Gideon does not always make the wisest choices, this story highlights his personal dependence on the Lord to win this battle.

NEW TESTAMENT

Read Matthew 14:22-32

- Tell us about a time where it seemed like everything was against you. Where was God in the middle of this circumstance?
- The disciples' response to seeing a figure on the water was fear, and Jesus responded immediately to alleviate their fear. How does fear stop you from practicing desperate dependence? What does Jesus say in this passage about fear?
- Why do you think Peter asked for confirmation by asking Jesus to command him to walk on water? Do you think he wanted to test Jesus or was he looking for some great spiritual experience?
- Peter got out of the boat. What did that step of faith confirm for the disciples (*v33*)? Where is Jesus asking you to fully depend on Him?
- Once the wind died down and Jesus was among them again, the disciples worshiped Him and acknowledged that he was the Son of God. Share about a time when you looked back on a desperate situation and worshiped the Lord because you saw His hand in the situation.



Watch Core Questions Video: *Desperate Dependence*

northwestbible.org/story/dependence

YOUR STORY

ALLOW EVERYONE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

- Where are you desperately dependent on Jesus?
- What is something you can do/change/sacrifice to deepen your desperate dependence? How can this group help?

tell YOUR STORY

Find or create a picture that illustrates your desire for Jesus to come into your circumstance and rescue you.

Share on Social Media > *#desperatedependence*

#RevealHisStory

new testament COMMENTARY

In all recorded history only two men ever walked on water, Jesus and Peter. But Peter's faith was challenged when he saw the wind's effect on the water. As he sank, he cried to the Lord for help. Immediately the Lord caught him. Jesus rebuked Peter for his lack of faith (*cf. 6:30; 8:26; 16:8*), which had caused him to sink.

When they reached the boat, the storm calmed and the amazed disciples worshiped Him. This experience expanded their concept of Jesus, and, in response, they acknowledged Him as the Son of God.

OUR STORY

When have you TAKEN A RISK because of JESUS?

- When have you experienced a burst of adrenaline?
- What is the scariest thing you have ever done? How did it turn out?

DEFINITION *of* RISK

Risk is an action that exposes us to the possibility of injury or loss. Risk exists because we don't know what will happen in the future. We are not in control, but we trust the One who is. Taking a risk for Jesus can look different on any given day. For some, risk is speaking a truth about Jesus that might appear intolerant or unpopular. It could be risking life or freedom for the gospel.

For many, risk requires stepping outside of our comfort zone to meet the needs of others or to obey what the Lord calls us to do.

HIS STORY

OLD TESTAMENT

Read Daniel 3:8-30

- Do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego considered the risk they were taking by not obeying the decree of the King; and, if so, how do you think they were feeling about their decision?
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't need to pray and fast to know the right thing to do. They knew that God had said they should not worship any other gods before Him, and their fear and respect for the Lord was greater and more important to them than their fear of the king or fear of their own death. Are there areas in your life where your comfort or fears are keeping you doing from what God wants you to do?
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego trusted in God's character so much that they didn't need to be saved to feel like it was worth the risk. Have you ever made your calling about you instead of about Jesus? Are you hesitating to take a risk because you aren't sure of the outcome?
- What is the greatest risk you have taken for your faith? What was the outcome?
- Why do we have to take risks for Jesus? What is at stake? What does it do in us?

old testament COMMENTARY

Surprisingly, Daniel is nowhere to be found in this passage, but we know these four friends supported one another, took risks together, and individually remained faithful to the Lord. It is possible that they all stayed away from the public dedication (3:3) of the statue to avoid insulting the king directly, but the three were later confronted by jealous people. To a king who believes he is above all, the idea of "bow or burn" seems logical. Tyrants acknowledge no authority beyond their own, so everything else is treason. This was not an uncommon practice (*Jer 29:21-23*).

NEW TESTAMENT

Read Luke 10:25-37

- What is the first question the lawyer asked Jesus? What was his purpose in asking it?
- Why do you think the priest and the Levite chose not to take a risk and help the man attacked by robbers? If you came across a homeless man lying in the middle of the street, would you be willing to take the risk of helping him?
- What risks do you think the Samaritan took by caring for the man who was attacked by robbers?
- What is a basic principle of the Christian life that Jesus wants to teach us through this story?
- Have you taken a risk to go out of your way to help someone in great need? What was the result of this decision in your own life?



Watch Core Questions Video: *Taking a Risk for Jesus*

northwestbible.org/story/risk

new testament COMMENTARY

This parable is only found in Luke, and is in response to the question from a lawyer. This is a common exchange between a teacher and student. The student asks a theological question, and the teacher responds, "How do you read it?" The student answers and then a dialogue of correction or affirmation ensues. However here, the lawyer is looking for more than affirmation; he is looking for validation. Robbers were common, priests and Pharisees avoided the dead so as not to be unclean, but the Samaritan was a villain in the minds of the hearers. Jesus turns this outcast into an unlikely hero. It would have been a paradigm-shifting story.

YOUR STORY

ALLOW EVERYONE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

- When have you taken a risk because of Jesus?
- Where might Jesus be asking you to take a greater risk? How can we help?

tell YOUR STORY

Encourage others who might be considering taking a risk for Jesus by sharing your story (testimonial) of risk and its outcome.

Share on Social Media > *#risk4Jesus*

#RevealHisStory

OUR STORY

How are you experiencing UNEXPECTED JOY from JESUS?

“Joy is the serious business of heaven.”

C.S. Lewis wrote an entire book on the idea of being *Surprised by Joy*.

Today, we are going to dive into how when we become desperately dependent on Jesus, many times we receive unexpected joy.

- What things/situations do you find joy in?
- What things/situations in your life rob you of your joy?

DEFINITION *of* UNEXPECTED JOY

Unexpected joy comes when we follow Jesus and what He is calling us to do; and, as a result, He often does more than we could have ever imagined.

In the midst of circumstances beyond our control, Jesus provides pure contentment you never saw coming and didn't expect to find. Unexpected joy is knowing that Jesus delights in your trust in Him and thankfulness for Him, even when things aren't as you hoped. We experience the joy of His peace knowing He has our life and our circumstances in His hands.

HIS STORY

OLD TESTAMENT

Read *Genesis 17:15-22*

- Put yourself in Abraham's shoes. Is there any possible way, humanly speaking, for Abraham and Sarah to have a child? What emotions and/or thoughts come from this?
- Why did Abraham laugh to himself when God told him that his wife, Sarah, was going to have a baby? What does this say about Abraham and his faith?
- Instead of God's best, "Isaac," why do we settle for second best, "Ishmael" (*v.18*)?
- Have you ever told God (maybe through prayer) how He should solve a lingering problem or created your own solution because you couldn't see the Lord working on it for you? Share the details.
- Imagine the joy Abraham must have felt as God promised not only to bless Isaac but also to bless Ishmael. Have you ever experienced this kind of unexpected joy?

old testament COMMENTARY

This covenant (*Gen 15 and 17:1-14*) changes everything. It requires an identity (name) change, an outward sign (circumcision) and a renewed commitment for the family of God. God reassures Abraham and Sarah that He means to fulfill His promise for Abraham's offspring in a miraculous way. Isaac's name (literally "He Laughs") is a constant reminder of the surprise, joy, and even traces of doubt present in the immediate response of Abraham and Sarah (*Gen 18:12*). Abraham's act of obedience is seen in his instant circumcision of everyone in his household (*17:24-27*). The grace of God through Abraham is even extended to Ishmael.

NEW TESTAMENT

Read Luke 8:40-56

- What is Jesus' response both to the woman (v.48) and to Jairus (v.50)? When we are in a desperate situation, what does God desire from us?
- Why do times of crises often provide opportunities for ministry? Do you know someone who is experiencing a crisis right now? If so, what can you do for them to show the love of Christ?
- How can we experience joy even when we do not know how the situation is going to turn out?
- How did Jairus and his wife ultimately experience unexpected joy? Do you think their joy was heightened by first experiencing their daughter's death?
- Jesus told the people in Jairus' house that the girl is not dead, but just sleeping, and they laughed at Him. Was there ever a time when you lost all hope, but God came through for you?

new testament COMMENTARY

This account has two stories of healing miracles by Jesus that show His power over sickness and death. They are also found in Matthew 9:18–26 and Mark 5:21–43. These two stories juxtapose the far ends of the social spectrum from synagogue ruler to synagogue outcast. Luke emphasizes the desperation of Jairus in that this was his only daughter, while the woman's desperation is seen in the length of her illness and not being allowed to touch others or be touched. (Everyone in the crowd who touched her would become ceremonially unclean.) The faith of both are challenged and rewarded with unexpected joy.



Watch Core Questions Video: *Unexpected Joy*

northwestbible.org/story/joy

YOUR STORY

ALLOW EVERYONE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

- How are you experiencing unexpected joy from Jesus?
- Where do you desire to see unexpected joy?

tell YOUR STORY

Write a thank you note to someone who has made an impact on your life ... someone you never thanked for walking with you through a dark time, someone who invested in you, or someone who gave you something when you needed it. In that note, express the joy God gave you through them.

Share on Social Media (if you can) > *#unexpectedjoy*

#RevealHisStory

OUR STORY

- Who has invested in you spiritually?
- How did you come to know Jesus?

Who are you INVITING *into* CONVERSATIONS *about* JESUS?

DEFINITION *of* INVITING

Conversations are simply interactions with people you connect with in your daily life. They involve sharing, asking questions, and listening to others' thoughts and perspectives. When you include Jesus in these conversations, you could reveal how He is working in your life, share encouragement, or maybe ask others how you can pray for them. These conversations are generally easy, don't involve pressure, and more importantly, deepen relationships.

HIS STORY

OLD TESTAMENT

Read Psalm 96

- What two things does Psalm 96:3 say to declare? Why do you think those are important when having conversations with others?
- What impact do verses 10 and 13 have on our eternal perspective? Does the fact that God will judge the world inspire you to begin having more conversations with others about Jesus?
- What are some ideas from Psalm 96 you can use to invite others into conversations about Jesus?
- Note all the things this Psalm tells us about God. What is significant about these things when it comes to our relationship with God and our conversations with others?
- What are some ways that you can bring God into your everyday conversations?

old testament COMMENTARY

This Psalm is a call to both worship and witness. When we are in true worship, we want to share with others. Our hearts burst with the awe of the Lord. It is possible this Psalm was used at the dedication of the Ark of the Covenant by David when it was placed in the tabernacle (*1 Chron 16*) or at the dedication of the rebuilt temple after the Babylonian captivity.

NEW TESTAMENT

Read *John 4:1-26*

- How did Jesus step outside His comfort zone in verse 9? What do you think the Samaritan woman was feeling?
- How long did it take Jesus to transition the conversation to something spiritual? Do you get nervous about shifting a conversation to something about Jesus?
- Jesus had good news to share with the Samaritan woman; He encouraged her with the promise of never being thirsty again and eternal life. How can we follow Jesus' model of encouragement in our conversations?
- Many people in our sphere of influence may know the premise of Christianity but haven't trusted Jesus as their Savior. What are some natural ways to ask about what someone may already know about Jesus and to talk further about their relationship with Jesus? Will you role play an example of this?
- Who would you like to start a conversation with about Jesus? How can we help?



Watch Core Questions Video: *Inviting People into Conversations about Jesus*

northwestbible.org/story/inviting

YOUR STORY

ALLOW EVERYONE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

- Who are you inviting into conversations about Jesus?
- Who is the Lord prompting you to initiate conversations with about Jesus?

tell YOUR STORY

Role play in your group this week. Consider with whom the Lord is prompting you to initiate conversations about Him. Role play what the other person might say so it takes some of the fear out of it. Practice how you would bring up Jesus and what He is doing in your life. The drama lovers in your group could model this for others in your group who may be nervous to practice. Sometimes our fears of what might happen never happen, and if we practice we realize it is not as scary as we imagined. Take a picture or video of this activity. As a bonus, record a two-minute video of you sharing your testimony.

Share on Social Media > *#invitingintoconversations*

#RevealHisStory

Normally, Jews would have avoided Samaria and Samaritans. A Jewish rabbi would not have initiated a conversation with any woman and may have not even acknowledged her existence. Jesus is shattering cultural norms. The woman is coming in the heat of the day, presumably to avoid other women who would regularly be there in the cooler hours. Jacob purchased this well (*Gen 33:1*) after his reuniting with Esau.

REVEAL *His* STORY

OUR STORY

We want the Core Questions to become a spiritual practice for you and your group.

Simply put, a spiritual practice is a tool you use to help you become aware of God and to deny yourself.

In this case, you deny your urge to hide or minimize.



Watch Core Questions Video: Summary

northwestbible.org/story/summary

Begin with the Core Questions, involving each member in your group. Two ways you can do this are:

- Allow each person to choose a question to answer.
- As the leader, you choose a question; all those who desire to answer it can. Then, go to the next question.

core QUESTIONS

Where are you **DESPERATELY DEPENDENT** *on* **JESUS?**

When have you **TAKEN A RISK** *because of* **JESUS?**

How are you experiencing **UNEXPECTED JOY** *from* **JESUS?**

Who are you **INVITING** *into* **CONVERSATIONS** *about* **JESUS?**

HIS STORY

LIFE OF DAVID

If you want to explore more about how our story reveals His story, below are four snapshots from the life of David. Read the passage and consider how the Core Questions reveal God through the narrative.

DESPERATE DEPENDENCE

Read 1 Samuel 24:3-20

- Where do you see David being desperately dependent on God?
- Could you be desperately dependent in this way?
- How does this passage help you apply desperate dependence?

RISK

Read 1 Samuel 17:20-54

- When do you see David taking a risk?
- What makes this a risk?
- In what ways does this passage inspire you to take a risk?

UNEXPECTED JOY

Read 2 Samuel 6:12-19

- Where do you see David experience unexpected joy?
- Why is it unexpected?
- What brings you this type of joy?

INVITING

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-14

- How is Nathan inviting David into a conversation about the Lord?
- What do you think Nathan is thinking/feeling as he tells his story?
- David is confronted with God's truth which leads to repentance. When you invite people into conversations, what type of response are you expecting? Why?

life of david COMMENTARY

David was the youngest son of Jesse. Samuel anointed David to be king. The only problem was that Israel already had a king – Saul. After David defeats Goliath, he joins Saul's court as an armor bearer, soldier and musician. David and Saul's son, Jonathan, develop a deep friendship. Jonathan saves David's life by warning him of Saul's desire to kill him. Eventually Saul dies, which allows David to be the first to unite the northern and southern parts of Israel. David becomes the ideal king in Israel's history. He is in the lineage of Jesus and is credited with writing a majority of the Psalms.

tell YOUR STORY

The purpose of this five-week series has always been to ask the Core Questions of yourself and of others. So, do this as a spiritual practice. Ask one or more of these questions of yourself every day for the next 40 days. Look for opportunities to ask others – around the dinner table, at work, on a bike ride, wherever. Journal your reflections throughout these 40 days.

#RevealHisStory