



THE JOURNEY LEADER PLAYBOOK

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WHY THE JOURNEY?

The Journey group experience is focused on helping men understand and embrace these three questions:

1. Do I need God?
2. Can I trust Him?
3. What does it look like to trust Him?

We don't just want men to answer them. We want the way men answer these questions to radically impact their lives.

In addition to answering these questions, we also want to see men:

- Get unstuck in their faith, their leadership, and their relationships.
- Move what men know in their heads to their hearts and their everyday lives.

- Experience God's love on a deeper level.
- See God and themselves more clearly.
- Experience life change that is noticed by those around you.

PRELAUNCH DOCS

[The Journey Calendar](#)

This spreadsheet outlines the entire 10-month plan for the journey. Since this is a pilot group, this calendar is a work in progress.

Group Rosters and Dates

[Sal and Adam](#)

[Brian and Shane](#)

[The Role of a Leader](#)

What are the characteristics, expectations, and best practices of a Journey leader?

[The Core Elements of the Journey Sessions](#)

Every Journey session is unique, but there are core elements that help to accomplish the primary wins of the Journey.

[Email Examples](#)

Keeping your group informed is vital. Use these email examples to keep everyone in the loop on dates, details, and next steps. And be sure to personalize them for your group.

KICK-OFF EVENT

Welcome to the Journey! Thank you for leading a group through this 9-month experience. The most important thing you can do is love the people in your group. The most effective way you can do that is to pray for them. Pray that God prepares their hearts and minds, let the Spirit guide your time, and trust Him with the outcomes. As leaders, you get to set a precedent for realness and vulnerability in your group.

The Primary Wins for the Kick-Off Event:

1. Men connect with and see all the guys who are going through LDG/JOURNEY together.

2. Men are excited for this group adventure.
3. Expectations are set.
4. Calendars are aligned.
5. Men know what to do next.
6. Group members were given space to ask questions.

Kick-Off Event Prep Checklist

1. Read through the [Role of a Leader](#).
2. Ensure your group roster is finalized.
3. Get with Shane about group binders.
4. Text each group member with a reminder about the kick-off's date, time, and location. Ask if they have any questions.
5. Send an official welcome email with dates, roster, and session 1 homework. See Welcome Email Template below for email examples.

[Welcome Email Template](#) (Updated 08-19-25)

We recommend that leaders send a welcome email and then follow it up with a phone call or text to make sure members have clarity regarding the group launch.

[Leader's Agenda Template](#)

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

[Journey Commitment](#)

Communicate the importance of going through this with their spouses. Make sure the group members know to bring a signed copy to session 1, unless you sign it together as a group at the kickoff event. The link above is for the group copy. [Here's](#) the individual copy.

Kick-Off Event Follow-Up Checklist

1. Did you figure out the location of your next group meeting?
2. Send out a recap email.
3. Follow up with each member personally to see if they have any questions. Remind them to respond to the group meeting invites.
4. Start a group text. Encourage engagement with a simple question to answer.
5. If you want to use binders for your group, get with Shane.

This first session is pivotal as it will set the pace for the entire Journey experience.

The Primary Wins for Session 1:

1. All of the men in the group develop a sense of belonging early on.
2. There's a feeling of excitement in the men.
3. Men know what to do next.

Session 1 Prep Checklist

1. Do you need binders? Get them from Shane.
2. Decide whether the group will eat dinner together at the session and make a plan.
3. Text each group member with a reminder about Session 1's date, time, and location.
Ask if they have any questions.
4. Print and bring hole-punched copies of the following:
 - a. Homework Assignment
 - b. Genogram Activity
 - c. Relational Exercise

Leader's Agenda Template (Updated 09-2025)

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

Journey Commitment (with spaces for everyone to sign)

The group members will already bring signed copies of the commitment to session 1, but there is also significance in signing this document together as a group.

Bo's Café Resources

We want to encourage you to come up with questions that are personal to you and your group. Feel free to utilize the [Bo's Café Core Themes](#) resource, which provides questions, quotes, scripture, and application to help reinforce core themes from the book. Other resources are below.

1. [Bo's Café Discussion Questions from LDG](#)
2. [Bo's Café Possible Questions for The Journey](#)

Homework Assignment

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them.

1. Read the Book: Seeing God as a Perfect Father: and Seeing You as Loved, Pursued,

- and Secure by Louie Giglio and complete a 1-pager.
- 2. Complete the Genogram exercise and questions
- 3. Complete the Relational Exercise (done by someone else)

Recap Email Template

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps. For session 1, we also recommend sending out the complete list of future group meeting dates.

Session 1 Follow-Up Checklist

- 1. Send a recap email to the group.
- 2. Follow up with each member individually to check for any questions. If needed, remind them to respond to the calendar invites.
- 3. If you haven't already, start planning the retreat. Key priorities include:
 - a. Securing a location
 - b. Creating a meal plan, and consider assigning a point person to take the lead on it.

SESSION 2 | OCT | Do I Need God? | My Past

The goal of session 2 is to help men understand their past to provide clarity for their future.

The primary wins for session 2:

- 1. Men are given time to reflect and discuss how they have been shaped by past relationships and experiences.
- 2. Men continue to step towards creating a high-trust environment of authentic community. Modeling vulnerability in sharing your story will help with this.

Session 2 Prep Checklist

- 1. Will the group eat together again? If so, who is bringing food?
- 2. **Text** each group member with a reminder about the session's date, time, and location. Ask if they have any questions.
- 3. **Print** and **bring** hole-punched copies of the following:
 - a. Homework Assignment
 - b. Three Feelings Exercise
 - c. Three Feelings Wheel
 - d. Story Prep

[Leader's Agenda Template](#)

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

[Seeing God as a Perfect Father Discussion Questions](#)

Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

[Homework Assignment](#)

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. Read ch. 1-5 of the book: *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows* by James Bryan Smith and complete a 1-pager.
2. Complete the Three Feelings exercise.
3. Prepare to share your story at the retreat.

Important: We recommend not only printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment but also emailing it out after the group meeting.

[Recap Email Template](#)

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

Session 2 Follow-Up Checklist

1. Send a recap email to the group.
2. Follow up with each member individually to check for any questions. If needed, remind them to respond to the calendar invites.
3. Continue to dial in the retreat details. Key priorities include:
 - a. Secure a location
 - b. Create a meal plan, and consider assigning a point person to take the lead on it.

SESSION 3 | NOV | Do I Need God? | My Present

Your goal for session three is to create an environment for group members to become more

known by each other and to foster an environment of grace.

When you can trust others with your vulnerable stories and process what's not working, your group helps each other develop a posture of humility in order to trust God. It's hard to shift into months four through six of, "Can I trust God?" if we don't start with a posture of humility. Many people live in a way that they "feel fine," which is similar to thinking, "I don't really need God." Your maturing process gets stunted because of this. Processing and developing a humble posture will happen naturally as you create a space for everyone to get to know each other more while sharing their stories. Have fun, pray for a high-trust environment of grace, and enjoy your time! Please assign **Trueface Conversation** partners before the end of the retreat.

Leader's Agenda Template

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

Important: This agenda is designed for 8 faith stories. If you have a different number of stories to go through, please update the agenda to fit the needs of your group. Please make any adjustments to a copy of this agenda. Do not make changes to the original agenda template.

The Good & Beautiful God (ch 1-5) Discussion Questions

Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

Homework Assignment

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. Read ch. 6-9 of the Book: The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows by James Bryan Smith and complete a 1-pager
2. Practice 1-2 [Soul Training Exercises](#)
3. Complete Part 1 of the Trust Exercise
4. Work Through Trueface Conversations 2: How Do I Think God Sees Me?

Important: We recommend not only printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment but also emailing it out after the group meeting.

Co-leaders, please meet prior to the retreat to discuss and pray about who you will pair

together for the [Trueface Conversations](#). As leaders, you will be having smaller monthly huddles with your group members throughout the remainder of the group experience.

This might be outdated: the Trueface Conversations resource costs \$20. You can use the discount code **NPMEN** for 50% off. Look at it as if you're buying a book for LDG.

[List of Soul Training Exercises](#)

We have put together a document that outlines each of the Soul Training exercises from the book: The Good and Beautiful God.

[Recap Email Template](#)

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

SESSION 4 | DEC | Can I Trust God? | Lies and Truths about God

The goal of session 4 is to build off of session 3 as we continue on our journey through The Good and Beautiful God. We want to see men begin to ask themselves, can I *really* trust God with all of me and all aspects of my life?

The primary wins for session 4:

1. Men recognize areas in their lives where they struggle with letting go of control and trusting God.
2. Men's narratives of who God is are being shaped by the narratives of Jesus.

[Leader's Agenda Template](#)

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

[Discussion Questions: The Good & Beautiful God \(ch 6-9\)](#)

Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

[Homework Assignment](#)

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. Read ch. 1-4 of the Book: [The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation](#) by Jim Wilder & Michel Hendricks and complete a 1-pager.
2. Continue to Practice 1-2 [Soul Training Exercises](#) (Consider challenging the group to do Soul Training Exercise 7 together: Read and Listen to the Gospel of John.
3. Complete [part 2 of the Trust Exercise](#)
4. Work Through Trueface Conversations 4. Who Does God Say I Am?

Important: We recommend not only printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment but also emailing it out after the group meeting.

For the [Trueface Conversations](#). As leaders, you will be having smaller monthly huddles with your group members throughout the remainder of the group experience.

Note: the Trueface Conversations resource costs \$20. You can use the discount code **NPMEN** for 50% off. Look at it as if you're buying a book for LDG.

[List of Soul Training Exercises](#)

We have put together a document that outlines each of the Soul Training exercises from the book: The Good and Beautiful God.

[Recap Email Template](#)

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

SESSION 5 | JAN | Can I Trust God? | Is Lasting Joy Possible?

The primary wins for session 5:

1. Men have grown to trust the group enough to share 1 or 2 examples from the Trust Part 2 exercise and they invite men to help them
2. Men begin to believe and embrace this idea that they can experience lasting joy.

[Leader's Agenda Template](#)

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

[Discussion Questions: The Other Half of Church \(ch 1-4\)](#)

Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

[Homework Assignment](#)

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. Read ch. 5-8 of the Book: [The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation](#) by Jim Wilder & Michel Hendricks and complete a 1-pager.
2. Continue to Practice 1-2 [Soul Training Exercises](#)
3. Complete the [Character Growth Exercise](#)
4. Work Through [Trueface Conversations](#) 5: Is My Primary Motive to Please or Trust God?

Important: We recommend not only printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment but also emailing it out after the group meeting.

For the [Trueface Conversations](#). As leaders, you will be having smaller monthly huddles with your group members throughout the remainder of the group experience.

Note: the Trueface Conversations resource costs \$20. You can use the discount code **NPMEN** for 50% off. Look at it as if you're buying a book for LDG.

[List of Soul Training Exercises](#)

We have put together a document that outlines each of the Soul Training exercises from the book: The Good and Beautiful God.

[Recap Email Template](#)

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

SESSION 6 | FEB | Can I Trust God? | Is Real Transformation Possible?

The primary wins for session 6:

1. Men are beginning to show signs they are choosing to trust God in areas of their lives.
2. Men are buying into this idea that real transformation is possible.

3. Men are still practicing soul-training exercises. They are beginning to form these into habits.

Leader's Agenda Template

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

Discussion Questions: The Other Half of Church (ch 5-8)

Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

Homework Assignment

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. **Listen** to Chapters 1-3 of the Book: [Living in Christ's Presence by Dallas Willard and John Ortberg](#) and complete a 1-pager.
2. Continue to Practice 1-2 [Soul Training Exercises](#) and/or consider practicing activities mentioned in The Other Half of Church.
3. Complete the [Circles Exercise](#)
4. Work Through [Conversation 6: Trusting Others with Me](#)

Important: We recommend printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment and emailing it out after the group meeting.

List of Soul Training Exercises

We have put together a document that outlines each of the Soul Training exercises from the book: The Good and Beautiful God.

Recap Email Template

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

SESSION 7 | MAR | How Can I Trust God? | How to Step Into the Kingdom and Live There

The primary wins for session 7:

1. Men are encouraged and challenged to pursue deeper more meaningful relationships with other men. The kind of relationships that show they are willing to trust others with the real version of themselves.
2. Men are beginning to understand and embrace the idea that they can step into the kingdom of God, AND also experience it daily.

Leader's Agenda Template

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

Discussion Questions: Living in Christ's Presence (ch 1-3)

There are a lot of questions to pick from, please pick ones that you think will spur and challenge your group members. Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

Homework Assignment

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. Listen to Chapters 4-6 of the Book: [Living in Christ's Presence by Dallas Willard and John Ortberg](#) and complete a 1-pager.
2. Continue to Practice 1-2 [Soul Training Exercises](#)
3. Complete the [Time, Talents, and Treasures Exercise](#)
4. Work Through [Conversation 7: Understanding My Shame](#)

Important: We recommend printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment and emailing it out after the group meeting.

List of Soul Training Exercises

We have put together a document that outlines each of the Soul Training exercises from the book: The Good and Beautiful God.

Recap Email Template

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

SESSION 8 | APR | How Can I Trust God? | Trusting God with Life (Time/Talents/Treasures)

We are getting to the end of this journey together with our group. At this point, our prayer is that you and your group members are seeing the effects of what it looks like to make Jesus our teacher in our own lives.

The primary wins for session 8:

1. Men are authentically sharing how they are choosing to make Jesus their teacher.
2. Men are stepping towards trusting God with their time, talents, and treasures.

Leader's Agenda Template

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

Discussion Questions: Living in Christ's Presence (ch 4-7)

There are a lot of questions to pick from, please pick ones that you think will spur and challenge your group members. Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

Homework Assignment

There are four pieces of homework outlined in the document. Make sure your group members understand each of them. The homework assignment document includes links to all the assignments and supplemental resources.

1. Read the book: [Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God by Brennan Manning](#) and complete a 1-pager.
2. Continue to Practice 1-2 [Soul Training Exercises](#)
3. Complete the [Soul Training and Personal Ministry Plan Exercise](#)
4. Complete the [Write Your Eulogy Exercise](#)
5. Work Through [Conversation 8: Letting Others Love Me](#)

Important: We recommend printing and distributing copies of the homework assignment and emailing it out after the group meeting.

List of Soul Training Exercises

We have put together a document that outlines each of the Soul Training exercises from the book: The Good and Beautiful God.

[Recap Email Template](#)

We recommend that leaders send a follow-up email after each session. This email should clearly provide any homework assignments and next steps.

SESSION 9 | MAY | How Can I Trust God? | Ruthless Trust

This is it! You have reached the final destination with your nine-month Journey group! Your hope is that group members have learned to trust God and others differently, being transformed by the love of Jesus Christ in an environment of grace.

Similar to your first retreat, when you arrive at your destination, take some time to settle in and relax. Your group members will be making the transition from a busy work week and/or navigating childcare needs. As you process this month's content, it's not necessary to go through every question in the Soul Training and Personal Ministry Plan Exercise. As a leader, pick a few that stand out to you or others. Feel free to be flexible. This is your last session together, don't rush, enjoy each other!

The primary wins for session 9:

1. Men are continuing to step towards trusting God with themselves and their futures.
2. Men are leaning on another to help each other on their journeys ahead.
3. Men are encouraged about getting more involved in church and utilizing the leadership talents that God has given them.
4. Men are showing a desire to consider their eulogy as they move forward on their continued faith journeys.

[Leader's Agenda Template](#)

Feel free to customize the agenda for your group experience. Don't forget to assign roles to the individual leaders. Along with a schedule, the file also includes additional details, talking points, and key follow-up steps to help keep the group momentum going.

[Discussion Questions: Ruthless Trust](#)

There are a lot of questions to pick from, please pick ones that you think will spur and challenge your group members. Remember, these questions are not meant to replace your book summary questions. If you choose to use any of these questions, keep the focus on personal application.

Covenant of Silence

Give men the Covenant of Silence handouts. Challenge the men to not have their phones with them during this activity. Encourage the men to spend the first 30 minutes alone with God and focus on being silent while listening to their Heavenly Father. This might be very difficult for some, but don't give up! Included are some questions to process as they listen to their Heavenly Father. Encourage the men to invite Him into the questions.

The Journey Group Experience Reflection

Continue to reflect back over the entire group experience. Encourage the men to write down some of the most significant things they've learned and the things they wish to take away from this experience. The printout has some questions to process during this time.

Additional Resources

These are also linked in the leader's agenda. Refer to the leader's agenda for more details on each of these.

1. [Affirming Guide](#)
2. [Communion Guide](#)

Homework Assignment (for the leaders)

Schedule a 1-on-1 with each of your group members approximately 1 month from the end of the group to check in on them, encourage them on their journeys, and continue challenging them to stay the course as they move in the direction of trusting God with themselves.

FOLLOW-UP EMAILS

Follow-Up Email Templates

After the final retreat, send a follow-up email to your group within a day or two outlining their next steps. Also, send a quick text to remind the guys to check their email. Be sure to personalize the email based on your group's experience.