

# DISCUSSION NOTES

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2016**

Pray and ask God to teach you, to help you trust Him more deeply, and to give you strength to live it out.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Listen to a clip or read part of the lyrics to R.E.M.'s song, "Everybody Hurts." How do songs like this point us to our need for Jesus and for a community of friends who care for us?

## DIGGING IN

2. Using the chart below, make a list of 5-7 observations comparing and contrasting the two groups of people in Mark 2:1-12. How are they described? What actions do they take? What attitudes are revealed? Are they accepted or rejected by Jesus?

THE PARALYZED MAN & HIS FOUR FRIENDS	THE SCRIBES & RELIGIOUS LEADERS

3. Whose faith is noticed by Jesus that initiates his response (verse 5)? Why is this surprising?
4. Jesus asks a rhetorical question about whether it is easier to heal the lame or to forgive sins (verse 9)? How would you answer that question? What point was Jesus making?
5. What is important about the crowd's response (verse 12)? Are we meant to respond the same way?

## LIVING IT OUT

6. In Mark 2:5, we see Jesus initially meet the paralyzed man's deepest need (forgiving his sins) while seemingly ignoring the man's most obvious need (physical healing). Have you ever experienced disappointment with God when He did not bring about the resolution you wanted in a real need? How might this passage help you even when God does not give you what you immediately want?
7. What lessons about spiritual friendship can we apply from the model of the paralyzed man and his friends? What are some specific ways that you can implement these in your relationships?
8. Are you willing to acknowledge that you are as hopeless as the paralytic to meet your deepest needs? Are you willing to seek Christ's help? Are you willing to allow others to "carry you to Christ" when your needs arise? Is this hard for you?

# PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY PLAN

## THE REAP METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

**REAP (Read, Examine, Apply, Pray)** is a straightforward way to process what you're reading, either on your own or with a small group of people. This is a flexible plan—you could use it quickly in a 20 minute time span, or you could spend hours digging into the Word with it. Our hope is that you will experience how to study the Bible during your group time, and then try it on your own during the remainder of the week. It may be a little messy, and that's OK. It will get easier with practice. This isn't the only way to study the Bible, but we believe it is a helpful tool to have in your toolbox.

The goal of this kind of Bible study is primarily to grow in faith and obedience, not mere knowledge. Keep that in mind and be attentive each step of the REAP process. Remember to pray as you open the Bible, asking God to encourage, teach, correct, and train you (2 Timothy 3:16) through your time in the Bible, as well as to show you the grace of Jesus.

### **READ**

Read the passage. If you have time, you might read it a few times, silently and out loud, with a pen in hand. Note or underline thoughts that might be significant. Answer the question, "What do I see?" As you're reading, think through these questions:

- What is happening in this passage? What things are emphasized, repeated, related?
- What do I see about God? What is God doing in this passage?
- What do I see about man? What are the people doing?

### **EXAMINE**

Examine the passage. At this point, answer some questions about the meaning of the text. Take time to reflect. Ask yourself these questions, and write down your thoughts:

- How do I think the author wants his audience to respond?
- What do I learn about God's character?
- What wrong beliefs about God and myself do I have?
- What do I like? Is there anything that I don't like?
- Is there anything I don't understand?
- What seems most significant?

### **APPLY**

Apply the passage to your own life. Answer the question, "No matter where I am spiritually, what would it look like for me to live out what I just read?" Some questions to consider might include:

- How do I need to repent or change?
- What truths do I need to believe?
- What false beliefs must I turn from?
- What can I do – empowered by the Holy Spirit – to live out this passage?

### **PRAY**

Pray through the passage and your application, asking God to change your heart and to change your life. Ask that God would be glorified as you seek to apply the passage this week. Ask God to make his love and his grace real to you.

After you finish, share what God taught you with at least one person—your roommate, your spouse, your kids, your friends, or your coworkers. Don't keep what God taught you to yourself.

If you would like help finding a Bible reading plan, ask your group leader or pastor; Or, visit <http://www.esv.org/resources/reading-plans-devotions/>.

*The above plan is modified from The Austin Stone and is available at [austinstone.org](http://austinstone.org).*