

God and Football

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

This will be a series about spiritual warfare, utilizing football as an analogy of that. Armor of God, and three different Bible accounts of spiritual warfare: David & Goliath; Daniel in the Lions den; Elijah on Mt. Carmel.

God and Football Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon and life group
1	1/27	Vs. the Raiders
2	2/3	(Socials)
3	2/10	Vs. the Lions
4	2/17	Championship Game

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

God and Football - Saints vs. Lions

The Big Idea

Struggles in life can produce spiritual growth.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: Tell about a time in your life when you overcame some kind of challenge (sports, school, work, health, etc.). How did you feel after the fact?

Move #1: Let's begin by unpacking any thoughts that you took away from this weekend's sermon.

1. Did anything stand out to you from the message this weekend? Any insights or questions?
2. How did the story of Daniel challenge the way you think about opposition or obstacles in your life of faith?

Move #2: Daniel went through a lot of difficulties on the road of walking with God, as we may, yet he humbly persevered. Read and discuss the following text from the Apostle Peter:

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 (NIV)

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And,

“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

3. Why should we not be surprised by hardships or painful experiences in life, even if we're trying to honor God (verse 12)?
4. Daniel was tested, and so are we. When was a time that you felt "tested"? What do you feel came out of that experience as it relates to your faith?
5. Do you think that people suffer more for doing good or bad? How about in your own life? Why do you think that is?
6. Reread verses 14-16. What makes suffering for doing good such a powerful witness against the enemy?
7. Have you ever experienced challenges, opposition, or even had life get worse in some way because of your faith (e.g. rejection, mocking, getting fired, etc.)?

Move #3: Let's see what the apostle Paul had to say about how we can overcome when we're feeling under attack.

Read Romans 5:2-5 (NIV)

2...And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

8. Trace Paul's thought progression in the text from suffering to hope (verses 3-4). How does one thing produce the next?
9. Tell us how you've experienced this process in your own life. In what sense has trial-forged character freed you to live a hope-filled life?
10. What assurance do we have, according to Paul, that our hope in Christ will never put us to shame?
11. It's been said that God does some of his best work in us through the hardest experiences. What is your reaction to that statement?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum further.

- Meditate on James 1:2-4 this week. Memorize it if you can. Pray it back to God.
- If anyone is currently dealing with hardship, pray over them in your meeting. Consider encircling them and laying hands on them as you do this.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

(The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them optionally to help supplement your personal preparation.)

Tyndell Commentary - 1 Peter 4:12

Suffering as a Christian is not to be thought of as unusual or strange: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. The word translated fiery ordeal means 'fire, burning' (as in Rev. 18:9, 18), but Peter probably has in mind the use of the word in Proverbs 27:21 (LXX), 'Fire is the means of testing silver and gold.' Because of this sense, the word could also be translated 'refining fire'. The imagery is similar to that used in 1:7.

The image of a refiner's fire suggests that such suffering purifies and strengthens Christians. This idea is reinforced by the fact that it comes upon you (or: 'among you') to prove you. Here he uses the same word (peirasmos) which he used in 1:6 ('trials') in its positive sense of a trial expected to have a positive outcome. The readers are encouraged to see God's good purpose behind their difficulties, enabling them to grow stronger in faith and give more glory to God. This he [Vol 17: 1 Pe, p. 186] explains in the following verses, showing that such trials are not to be thought unusual or strange, for they are a normal part of the Christian life.