

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	Saints vs. Raiders
2	2/3	(Socials)
3	2/10	Saints vs. Lions
4	2/17	Championship Game

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

God and Football - Championship Game

The Big Idea

Protect your head.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: What's the worst injury you've ever suffered? Was it preventable?

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. The big idea for this week is "protect your head". Before we get into what protects our head, what are some ways that the enemy attacks our mind?

Move #2: Next let's discuss what it means to wear the "helmet of salvation" to protect our minds.

Read Romans 10:9-11 (NIV)

9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

3. According to the Apostle Paul, what is required to be saved?
4. Would a couple of you briefly share how you were saved and what that felt like?

Read 1 John 5:11-13 (NIV)

11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

5. If you unexpectedly died today, how confident are you that you would have eternal life with God?

6. If you're a believer, there's a big difference between thinking you might be saved and knowing that you're saved. How can we be confident in our salvation?

Note to leader: This is a great opportunity to help build confidence based on Jesus' finished work on the cross. If someone expresses significant doubts, be sure not to rush this part of the discussion.

7. How can confidence in our salvation protect our minds from the enemy's attacks?

Move #3: Next let's look at a passage that paints a picture of the hope we can have in Jesus and how this helps to protect us.

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 (NIV)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

8. How would you define "living hope" (verse 3), and how would you describe that to someone who does not yet believe?
9. What difference does it make in your life knowing that you and your eternal inheritance are "shielded by God's power" (verse 5)?
10. When you consider your salvation are you "filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" (verse 8)? Why or why not? What do you think that would look like?
11. How can wearing the "helmet of salvation" protect us from worry and fear of threats we're facing right now?

Note: Verse 9 speaks of how our ultimate salvation is something we are presently "receiving." It's an on-going, active verb. The helmet of salvation isn't exclusively about a one-time change of status in our relationship with God, but also a process of being set free from the grip and destructive consequences of sin in our lives.

12. How can we continue to put on the helmet of salvation every day?

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

- If you would like to receive Jesus and the gift of eternal life, you can do that at any time, even tonight! (Ask if anyone would like to.)
 - **Note to leader:** If there is anyone in your group that is either struggling with their assurance of salvation, or even has not yet come to the point of believing in Christ, offer to get coffee with them to give you the chance to go deeper in a more personal setting.
- Meditate on 1 Peter 1:3-9 and journal your thoughts. Pray and affirm to God the truths he is revealing to you.

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.)

The new birth God has given to Peter and his readers, changing their status before God (2:24; 3:18, 21; Titus 3:5) and their lifestyle before others (1 Peter 1:22–23), theologians call *regeneration*. It is part of the large drama of cosmic regeneration (Matt. 19:28) that finds its climax in the glorious final existence (Rev. 19–22). Thus, through the new creation work of Jesus as a result of his resurrection, the new life the church receives through him is part of that grand act of a new creation. Furthermore, it is fundamental for New Testament teaching to see this work of creation as a work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7–11), though that dimension is not mentioned here by Peter (but cf. 1 Peter 1:2, 12; 3:18; 4:6).

Peter tells the readers that they have benefited from this new birth because of God's "mercy." Mercy is that pity God shows toward humans in spite of their sin and because of their total helplessness to right their wrongs; God permits them to be part of the special people of his favor (2:10). This great new birth sets off a chain reaction in his plan of redemption: His mercy stimulates their new birth, and their new birth stimulates a "living hope." This orientation toward the future that God will bring through Christ constantly appears in this letter (e.g., 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15)....

In other words, for Peter, salvation meant the benefits believers have found, do find, and will find because of their faith in the work of Jesus Christ and the blessed Holy Spirit. And this salvation is an experience only for those who put their faith and focus their obedience on Jesus Christ (1:2, 14, 21). Thus, his message is an exclusivist message: It finds salvation in Christ alone and only for those who trust and obey him. (Scot McKnight, *NIV Application Commentary* on 1 Peter)