

EQUIP

Discipleship Weekend

March 9 & 10, 2018

Late Night Bible Study
Teaching Materials
EQUIP to WIN

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Notes to the Leader:

This is the sixth year we have held EQUIP, so if you have taught the Late Night Bible Study before, you already know the drill. However, many of our leaders are new to this, so I have once again included the basic instructions. Keep what works and throw out the rest.

This guide is meant to help you lead the youth through the late night Bible study which is intended to be held in the host homes after the big evening session. Some churches choose to go back to their home church and do this as a large group. Others will use this material on the Wednesday night prior to or after the event or possibly even for Sunday School. Feel free to use it as you see fit. Our hope is that your group will be able to connect what they hear at the large group rally with this material which will be shared in a much smaller group. We want this to be an interactive time- just you and a bunch of kids talking about God.

I have included a suggested outline and some illustrations and activities.

Helpful Hints:

- Make sure everyone knows each other before you start. It will help with the discussion. If your group is larger, personal introductions may not be necessary, but at least take a couple of minutes to encourage them to get to know the ones sitting near them.
- Don't start the lesson as soon as you get back to the house, but don't wait until midnight either. Give everyone time to get comfortable and hang out a little. You do want to set a time when they should be ready to sit down and do the study.
- Establish a few ground rules. For this time to be effective, you want as few interruptions as possible. Everyone should go to the restroom first and put their cell phones away. They can catch up on social media later after the Bible study.
- Be relaxed and give the students the freedom to ask questions and express their opinions, but always bring it back to the Word.
- Don't just read the material to the students. Much of what is written here is meant for your eyes only as background and suggestions. Incorporate what is written into your own teaching style. Feel free to look to outside sources for more information if you need it.
- Don't let it drag on. Keep the Bible study moving so that you aren't boring them to death. Each group is different, but 25-35 minutes is about as long as you can expect their attention to last, especially this late at night.
- Allow time between the Bible study and bed time for students that may want to talk more to come to you and talk. This could be the most productive time of the weekend. If you have students from more than one church, keep the youth leaders from each church informed of any issues that are brought to your attention.
- Have Fun!

Outline

Introduction and Background Information

Activity

Read Scripture – Romans 8:31-39

1. God freely gave it all.
2. Jesus willingly did it all.
3. Love conquers all.

Conclusion and Final Instructions

Introduction and Background Information

The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans to a mixed group of Christians, most of whom he had not yet met. The Roman church met in homes and was made up of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. At times, they struggled with how their Jewish heritage and the Law related to how they were to live as followers of Jesus. Paul spends a lot of time addressing these issues. Romans is basically a textbook on Christian doctrine.

Chapter 8 begins with a profound declaration that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. In other words, we have no reason to fear judgment, because Jesus has already taken care of our sin. Paul understood that living in the freedom of forgiveness was a difficult concept for believers to understand, especially those who were raised under the Jewish law. He reminded them that God did all the work by sending Jesus to save us and redeem us. He reminds them of God's sovereignty over all things and that God willingly chose us to be His even though we were sinners who didn't deserve it.

In the passage we will focus on, Paul urges us to respond to this truth. Because God has already done so much, we can be assured that He will not stop there. He will continue to love us and keep us secure. That includes protecting us from anything that tries to separate us from Him. Paul wants his readers, and us, to know that we are secure in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

You will have some students who doubt that God can love them completely. Even those who know Christ as Savior may not understand the security they have as children of God. Many of them think of God as our distant judge rather than as a loving Father. They may struggle with insecurity, because they find their value in their own abilities or what others think of them. Lead them to understand that every follower of Jesus is secure, not because of anything we do, but because of what He has done and continues to do for us.

Activity - Would You Rather? Fear Factor Edition

The point of this activity is just to get them talking about the things that scare us. You can either have them take turns answering a Would You Rather question or just throw them out to the group and get everyone's feedback. If you have never played Would You Rather, just know that there is no right or wrong answer.

- Would you rather step on a snake or find a spider in your bed?

- Would you rather make a speech in front of the entire school or have to be lab partners with someone you have a crush on?
- Would you rather swim with sharks or alligators?
- Would you rather be blind or deaf?
- Would you rather live somewhere where no one understands anything you say or live on a deserted island all by yourself?
- Would you rather ride a bike really fast while blindfolded or be chased through the woods at night?
- Would you rather watch a horror movie marathon and then have to sleep alone in the house or go to school in your pajamas on picture day?
- Would you rather eat monkey brains or a ghost pepper?
- Would you rather be poor and beautiful or rich and ugly?
- Would you rather know exactly how long you are going to live or know how long everyone you know will live?
- Would you rather be very successful and lose all the friends you have now or be a complete failure at everything you try except keeping your friends?
- Would you rather share your faith with a random stranger or with a relative who claims to be an atheist?

Fear can cause us to question everything. According to the Bible, God did not give us a spirit of fear. He wants us to be secure in who we are in Him, knowing that we have the victory over the scary things in life.

Read the Scripture – Romans 8:31-39

To prepare for the lesson and understand the context, you may want to read all of Romans 8 as you study. This will put this passage in context. You may also want to share some of the background information about Paul and the Roman church to set the stage for the passage of Scripture.

1. God freely gave it all. (Romans 8:31-33)

Paul begins with a question – “If God is for us, who is against us?” He isn’t asking whether or not we have enemies, because we all do. Satan is our enemy, and sometimes he will use people to get at us. Paul is saying here that compared to God, no one can really stand against us. He is bigger than any enemy we could possibly have.

Then he points out that God freely gave His Son, Jesus, for us to be saved. John 3:16 says it this way: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life.” (see if someone wants to quote this verse instead of reading it.) Paul’s argument goes like this: since God gave us the most important gift He could ever give, why in the world would he withhold anything else? This doesn’t mean we all get to win the lottery or even have an easy life. What it does mean is that God never holds back from us anything we need to face life. His desire for us is that we are victorious over our problems. He willingly gives us all the tools and resources we need to be successful and live a life that glorifies Him.

We must also remember that God is under no obligation to bless us. He gave us His Son and all the blessings we receive, because He chooses to. We don't deserve it. This also means we cannot earn it no matter what we do, nor can we lose it because of anything we do.

Questions to ponder:

- Do you ever wonder if God cares what is going on in your life?
- Are you ever worried that He won't take care of something you need?
- How does it make you feel to know that God is on your side?

2. Jesus willingly did it all. (Romans 8:34)

Paul lays out a clear Gospel message in this verse. He asks the question "Who is it that condemns?" and then answers by saying that Jesus:

- Has died for us
- Was raised from the dead
- Ascended into heaven where He sits at God's right hand
- Intercedes for us.

This simple Gospel message is the answer to so many of the problems that we face. Unfortunately, we tend to think that it is not enough. We try to add our efforts to what Jesus has done. The truth is that He already completed it all. His death and resurrection defeated sin and judgment. The picture of Him sitting at God's right hand interceding for us is as an advocate or lawyer on our behalf.

Imagine you have been caught speeding. You received a ticket and have to appear in court. You know you're guilty. The officer has clear evidence of your guilt. You even admitted to the officer that you were speeding. When you stand before the Judge, you know you are going to receive punishment. The only problem is that you have no way to pay your fine. You have no money and even if you did, you know that the fine will be more than you could possibly earn. So there you are, standing before the Judge, guilty and ready to be condemned. Then, someone speaks up on your behalf and says, "Don't worry, I have already paid the fine for you. You are free to go." What a relief?! This is what Jesus has done for us. He has paid a penalty we could never pay, one He didn't owe. There is nothing else we have to do, nothing else we can do.

The beauty of this is that we can live in freedom, because of what Jesus has already done. Our relationship and eternal home is secure, because Jesus died, was resurrected, and now intercedes for us. He does this not because we deserve it, but because he chooses to.

Questions to ponder:

- Have you accepted Jesus' free gift of salvation?
- How does it make you feel to know that you cannot earn God's favor or pay for your own sins?
- Does the truth that Jesus willingly did it all make you want to live differently?

3. Love conquers all. (Romans 8:35-39)

Even though we know that God gave His Son and that Jesus died for us, we often struggle to find our security in Him. We look to other things like our own ability, our friends, our family, our stuff, our popularity, or whatever we cling to for validation. Jesus did not save us so that we could continue to live defeated lives. To that end, He wants us to understand that His love is not based on us, it is based on His choice and He does not waiver.

Paul asks the question: "What can separate us from the love of Christ?" Then he makes an extensive list of things that do not have any power over us, even though we sometimes act as though they do.

- Tribulation – the trials and struggles of life
- Distress – those things that worry us or cause anxiety, inward struggles
- Persecution – opposition to our faith
- Famine or nakedness – tragedies related to our basic needs
- Peril or sword – conflict related to violence
- Death or Life – literal physical death or life
- Angels or Principalities – supernatural beings, both good and evil
- Things present or things to come – our past and our future including our own actions and those things that have happened to us
- Powers – those in authority over us
- Height or Depth – geographical distance
- Any created thing – basically anything and everything except God Himself

Do you see how comprehensive God's love is? Paul doesn't list all of these things to limit God's love, but to express that there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from the love of God. His love is so vast and so deep that it crosses all boundaries and all circumstances.

And because His love is demonstrated by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins (see Romans 5:8), it is already a done deal. We don't have to earn His love or wait for it. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us to demonstrate this love. Now we are able to conquer any enemy, overcome any obstacle, rise to any challenge, because God's love is a sure thing.

Questions to ponder:

- How is God's love different than the love a person shows for another person?
- Is there anything more powerful than the love of God?
- How does it make you feel to know that God loves you unconditionally?

Conclusion

Our theme this weekend is EQUIP to WIN, but sometimes we have to go back to the very root issue to help us understand why we have victory in Christ. We aren't winners just because we are gifted or by virtue of our own abilities. We win, because God freely gave His Son Jesus who then willingly gave His life and intercedes for us. We win, because His love for us doesn't depend on us,

but on the work and person of Jesus, God the Son. And we win, because that kind of love never fails and is more powerful and more secure than any other force in the universe.

Leader, be sure to have a time of decision after the lesson is completed. You have given them a lot to think about and work through. It may take a while for them to process how this works out in their own life. On the other hand, some of them may see an immediate area where they need to surrender. Be sure to share enough of the gospel so that if you have any students who are not saved, they will have heard the good news. Make sure all the students know that you are available if they need to talk and that you want to know if there are any decisions made. Also challenge them to make those decisions public at both EQUIP large group and in their own church. Close in prayer.

Thank you for taking the time to disciple young people. Our hope and expectation is to have students saved at EQUIP and we know that most of the decision will probably happen in the homes. I will be praying that God blesses us with the opportunity to see young people saved and others challenged to live a life of greater faith for Him.