

Lesson 7

One Thing

A 7-Week Study Guide

Share about one of the following:

- A time when you started something (a project, class, hobby, etc.)
- You believed you succeeded something but failed (test, class, etc.)
- Thought a date went well but later found out the other person didn't

Hey Life Group Leaders! Welcome to the 7th and final week as we finish up our Life Group Video Series, "One Thing!" We hope that this series was uplifting, challenging, and helped you find your next step in your journey with God!

This week, once again you have six questions coming up based on the video lesson this week! Remember that these leader notes are to serve as a guide for further and deepening conversation with your Life Group, not as the answers! Enjoy this week's discussion and always remember to ask an extra question such as "Why do you believe that?" to draw out some more conversation from your group members!

To start off this lesson, this is a very simple "get to know you" question with a great opportunity for your whole group to share. It may help if you, as the leader, are transparent and willing to share. This can be a fun way to share stories and learn more about the people in your group.

Which of the following best describes you right now and why?

- You're coming out of a valley
- You're in a valley
- You're not in a valley

This is partially a get to know you question, but it is also a little deeper than some of the others. The answer may have a story. Use this opportunity to get to know your group members a little more as they share. This may also lend some insight as to how they will answer or why they answer some of the following questions. Be attentive as you listen to your group share.

Read Philippians 3:7-8. What does Paul mean when he says that we should consider everything in life as "loss" or "garbage" compared to knowing Jesus?

Philippians 3:7-8 reads, *"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ"*

Paul certainly had credentials. His family heritage, training, and zeal would have secured him a place as one of the up-and-coming Jewish leaders. But Paul's encounter with Christ radically changed his appraisal of those credentials. When Paul stood face to face with the risen Christ, his résumé did nothing for him. And all that Paul had once considered assets he now counted as losses. What mattered now was relationship with God; knowing Christ and gaining Christ. Being formed into Christ's likeness takes learning to recognize and abandon those things that must be counted as losses in light of our encounter with Christ (possessions, credentials, attitudes, etc.) so that we might focus on the "gain" of relationship with Christ.

Do you consider everything in your life as "loss" compared to knowing Jesus? Now, before you answer, think about that question again ... Do you really consider everything in your life as "loss" compared to knowing Jesus? Why or why not?

This is another opportunity for everyone in the group to share their thoughts. This may be a very difficult question for some people in your group to answer. Encourage your group members to share the "why" behind their answers with biblical backing. They may not have biblical backing. Talk through that a bit. Not condemning but talk through the ideal goal. There may be some embarrassment or shame the certain members feel as they answer this question. Be encouraging and leave room for growth and further understanding.

Read Philippians 3:12-14. According to these verses, what does Paul do to keep his focus on Jesus? How can Christians better keep their focus on Jesus during seasons of trials, grief, change, etc.?

Philippians 3:12-14 reads, *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

According to this passage, Paul says that he presses or strains forward, reaching out for Christ. He says, I'm off and running and I'm not turning back!

Although being transformed into the image and likeness of Christ is not a matter of religious performance, neither is it a passive, "couch potato" contentment in

God. God, in all his grace, has taken hold of us. Our response is to take hold of God in hope and faith. There is a kind of aggressiveness about authentic Christian spirituality and living. Paul, knowing that his encounter with Christ has brought him only to the doorway of everything that God has for him, communicates this aggressiveness with powerful imagery. He presses on – he intentionally pursues – making his goals of the Christian life his own. He strains forward to what lies ahead in pursuit of complete identification with Christ.

Read John 16:33. How can the truth of Jesus overcoming the world give you peace?

John 16:33 reads, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

There is a contrast here: between “in me” and “in this world” and between “peace” and “trouble.” These statements made by Jesus come to his disciples just before his death and ultimately affirms his final victory! This is an encouragement to all believers at various stages in their walk with God. Faithful believers can be assured that they do indeed know God, are forgiven, and have overcome the evil one. They are on a journey walking in rhythm with God’s word and need not fear.

What is one thing you can do this week to keep your focus on Jesus?

To close this lesson up for this week, this is a good opportunity to write some final thoughts or prayers for yourself and for your group members.

Take a few minutes to:

- Write down one personal takeaway from this lesson.
- Now, write about how this takeaway could be applied to your life.
- Finally, if you’re comfortable doing so, share your takeaway and life application with the group.

If you have a chance to give the group time to do this exercise, it would be good ... but don’t feel pressure to rush through the other questions (if you’re having healthy discussion) to do this exercise. If you run out of time but still want to take part in this exercise one idea is for group members to do this on their own time during the week and share what they’ve written with other group members via email or text.