

SIX SESSIONS

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

BECOMING MORE

THAN A GOOD BIBLE STUDY GIRL

LIVING THE FAITH AFTER BIBLE CLASS IS OVER



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Session 1

BECOMING MORE THAN A GOOD BIBLE STUDY GIRL

In My Heart

The reality is no person, possession, profession, or position ever fills the cup of a wounded, empty heart—not my heart, not your heart. It's an emptiness only God can fill.

DVD TEACHING SEGMENT

As you and your group watch Lysa teach on this topic, use the following outline to take notes on anything that stands out to you.

NOTES

No person, possession, or position can fill up our heart.

When we try to force something besides God to fill us, it quickly turns from a blessing into a burden.

Anything we use as a substitute for God is an idol, a false god.

It wasn't just the people of the Old Testament that struggled with idols.

The same answer their idols gave them is the same answer our idols give us.

With every "if only I had" statement that tries to trip us up, we must replace it with a truth from God's Word.

When I am satisfied with God and filled up with His truth, I can stop having unrealistic expectations from:

People,

Possessions,

And Positions.

DVD SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. As you watched the DVD teaching segment, what is one main point that you would like to apply to your life?

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2. Why is it so tempting to try to get our fulfillment from people, possessions, and positions?
3. How does this affect our relationships?
4. How does this affect our attitude toward possessions?

5. How does this affect us in the positions we hold?
6. How can we become more deeply satisfied with God?
7. With what Bible verses can you replace your “if only I had” statements?

BETWEEN-SESSIONS

Personal Bible Study

DAY 1

Read chapter 1 of the *Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl* book. If you'd like, record any highlights in the space below.

DAY 2

Complete this lesson:

I'm not sure when I first felt I wasn't good enough, but my earliest stinging memory of it happened in a place where strobe lights tumbled about in a skating rink full of elementary school kids. . . . I fidgeted with the laces of my skates hoping to send a very clear message: the only reason I wasn't couple skating was that I had a slight equipment malfunction. But in my heart, a false perception was cutting deeper and deeper into my soul with every beat of the Rick Springfield song. The false perception was rooted in this one flawed thought: You, Lysa, are not acceptable the way you are.

Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl, p. 17

1. During my growing up years, I was deeply affected by the feeling that I was unacceptable. Write briefly about a time when you did not feel acceptable.

2. Look up the following verses and summarize them here:
Proverbs 21:3

Isaiah 1:13–18

1 John 1:7

3. How does the world define the word “acceptable”?
4. How does Jesus define the word “acceptable”?

The word “acceptable” can literally be defined as “pleasing or worthy to the receiver.” It is who we are offering ourselves to that determines whether or not we are acceptable. If we offer ourselves to other people, we will never be wholly acceptable. People’s standards are illusive, airbrushed, unrealistic, temporary, and ever changing.

God’s standards are secure, based on what Jesus has done for us and not on anything we try to do ourselves. But we must make the choice to focus on Jesus and His definition of us rather than other people or worldly standards.

5. One verse on this matter that helped me tremendously is Jeremiah 29:11. Write that verse here.

What does this verse reveal about God?

What does this verse reveal about me?

6. Now let’s put Jeremiah 29:11 in context by reading verses 12 and 13 as well. What are three amazing promises made to us in these verses?

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These weren’t just rote prayers being offered up in an obligatory fashion. These were prayers that caused seeking—and not just casual seeking. These prayers caused a wholehearted seeking with a promise of finding God.

7. What is your honest assessment of your prayer life now? Circle the description that best fits you:
 - a. practically nonexistent
 - b. canned and obligatory
 - c. friendly but not powerful
 - d. effectively seeking with all my heart

Seeking God with all our heart means to be completely filled and fulfilled by Him. Fulfillment means to be completely satisfied. How might our lives look if we were so filled with God's truths that we could let go of the pain of our past, not get tripped up by the troubles of today, or consumed by the worries of tomorrow?

Let's start today by seeking to be filled up with a truth from God's Word addressing each of these areas.

8. Use your Bible, the "word search" function on *BibleGateway.com*, or a concordance to find a verse that addresses each of the following:
 Shame— (Letting go of the pain from our past)

Temptation— (Not getting tripped up by the troubles of today)

Worry— (Not getting consumed by the worries of tomorrow)

Write your three verses on 3 x 5 cards and practice praying them throughout your day. You may even want to insert your name into the verse. Also, ask God to help you see Him, hear Him, know Him, and follow His truth throughout this day.

We'll be building on this activity in session two, so save those index cards and keep them close at hand.

DAY 3

Read chapter 2 of the book *Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl*. If you'd like, record any highlights in the space below.

DAY 4

Complete this lesson:

How could I have everything I always dreamed would make me feel happy, significant, and loved and still feel so empty? This emptiness made me feel desperate, needy, complicated, full of unrealistic expectations. I quickly became disillusioned. Weren't Christians supposed to instantly have it all together after saying yes to God?

My relationships with my husband and growing family were strained and quickly went from being blessings to burdens. Even though I knew with my head that only God could fill my soul, I still found myself wanting my husband and kids to right my wrongs, fill up my insecurities, and make me feel loved. It just seemed easier to try and get these things from those I could see and touch. But even a great husband and wonderful kids made very poor gods. . . .

The reality is no person, possession, profession, or position ever fills the cup of a wounded, empty heart—not my heart, not your heart. It's an emptiness only God can fill. Anything we use as a substitute for God is an idol, a false god.

Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl, pp. 27, 30

1. Has there ever been a person, profession, or position you hoped would fill your emptiness? Write your thoughts here.

Read 1 Kings 18:20–39.

2. What was the response of the idols to whom King Ahab and his false prophets cried out? What were these idols able to do for them?

Record verse 29 here.

3. What was God's response to Elijah's plea? (See verses 36–38.)

What is your definition of "consumed"? ("Consumed" is the word choice in the NASB translation of verse 38, instead of "burned up.")

We have a choice to be consumed with things we think will fill us or consumed with God who is the only One who can satisfy us completely. But, have you ever gotten caught in the "If only I had" trap?

If only I had ... a better personality.

If only I had ... a skinnier body.

If only I had ... more money.

If only I had ... a husband.

4. Complete the following sentences with anything you've personally struggled with wanting.

If only I had . . .

If only I had . . .

FALSE IDOL #1: PEOPLE

5. Look up Luke 1:78–79 and record the verses here.

Can any person ever do this fully?

I like that Luke 1:78–79 mentions that God can shine on the darkness we feel when disappointment and emptiness overshadow us. What will we find when we allow God's consuming light to shine on our darkness?

FALSE IDOL #2: POSSESSIONS

6. Look up Matthew 6:19–21 and record the verses here.

When we set our heart on acquiring more and more things, we'll feel more and more vulnerable with the possibility of loss. What could happen to our heart if we are consumed with wanting things to fill us?

How might our heart be positively impacted by making our desires more eternally focused?

FALSE IDOL #3: POSITION

7. Look up Psalm 119:105 and record it here.

We don't need a better position to get us where we should go. We don't have to figure out our path and jockey to get ahead. What is the only thing we need to direct us, according to Psalm 119:105?

We can replace every “if only I had” statement that tries to trip us up with a truth from God's Word. The more we allow ourselves to be filled up with God's Word, the more consumed—positively absorbed—we'll be with God Himself. The more we are filled up with God, the less we are dependent on other people, possessions, or positions to fill us.

8. Complete this statement: *Because I am satisfied with God, I can stop having unrealistic expectations about . . .*

Person: _____

Possession: _____

Position: _____

DAY 5

Read chapter 3 of the book *Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl*. If you'd like, record any highlights in the space below.

DAY 6

Complete this lesson:

Satan delights in our feelings of inadequacy. He wants to help us stay there. He wants us to go to Bible study, learn the deep truths of God, leave all encouraged, and then come home and have a complete meltdown over putting nuts in ninety-seven brownies that didn't make the bake sale cut.

He wants us to entertain a very dangerous thought: "Why doesn't Jesus work for me?" When I let my brain run away with this line of thinking, I start wondering why Jesus didn't step in and help me remember the "no nuts" detail before it was too late. I mean, Jesus is quite capable of doing that, right? He is big and mighty, capable of moving mountains. Surely he could have stopped me from adding nuts and ruining those brownies. Maybe He just didn't care enough to stop me.

You see, if Satan can get us asking these kinds of questions, then we can easily justify distancing ourselves from God, once more reducing our relationship with Him to items on a checklist. I prayed. I gave. I served. I did my duty. Now, I hope God does His part and just keeps blessing my life.

But "Why doesn't Jesus work for me?" is never the right question. Instead, when circumstances shift and we feel we fall short, we should ask, "How can I see Jesus even in this?"

Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl, p. 41

If you have yet to read chapter 3 of the book *Becoming More Than a Good Bible Study Girl*, the event I'm talking about in the above excerpt has to do with me making 100 individually wrapped brownies for the school bake sale. As I was wrapping brownie number 97, my daughter reminded me of the no-peanut rule for her school. And these brownies had nuts—lots of nuts.

1. Have you had an everyday experience like this where something small in the grand scheme of things made you feel like a complete failure? Describe.

2. Have you ever felt frustrated that God didn't step in and help prevent a mishap in your life, either big or small? Explain.

Looking back on your mishap, how could you have made the choice to see Jesus in the midst of the mess? Did you learn something? Did this reveal a character issue you or your kids might need to work on? Might Jesus be using this to protect you from something worse from happening?

As I look back on my mishap, I can see several things. First, Jesus used this event to teach me how to separate my identity from my failures in life. Just because I fail at things doesn't mean I am a failure.

3. Look up Proverbs 24:16 and record it here.

What is the one word used to describe this man?

The word "righteous" means someone who is morally upright and virtuous. I like to think of a righteous person as being one who makes right choices that honor God daily.

4. This man loved and honored God, yet what do we know about his actions from this verse?

The word “fell” in the Hebrew language is *naphal*. The main idea behind this root is an accidental circumstance or an event. The righteous man didn’t mean to fall, but did. Oh how I can relate to this! Interestingly enough, this verb occurs 365 times in the Hebrew Old Testament . . . the exact number of days in a typical year.

5. How does this truth speak to you personally?

From this same verse, what do we know about the man’s reaction to his mishaps?

How does that inspire you?

A second thing Jesus used the brownie mishap to teach me was to see it as a call to action to pay closer attention to details.

6. What was your call to action through the mishap you described?

Lastly, Jesus used my mishap to teach me to find the humor in situations. There is humor in almost every mishap if we'll make the choice to see it. The only way I can have the mind-set to do this is to remain secure in God's love for me. I can't remain secure in my perfect performance. Just like the righteous man, I will fall and fail time and time again. However, I can remain in God's love for me. And that's a great place to be.

7. Record John 15:9–11 here. I think this might be another great passage for our 3 x 5 index card collection, don't you?