

The 2:7 Series

A course in personal discipleship to strengthen your walk with God

Book 2 Leader's Guide

February—2011 Edition



Introduction

The 2:7 Series

What the Holy Spirit expresses through Paul in Colossians 2:7 clearly defines what The 2:7 Series is designed to help accomplish in the lives of those who go through this discipleship training.

1. For Christians to be built up in Christ and established in their faith. This series of courses includes instruction in practical Bible study techniques, Scripture memory skills, strengthening the devotional life, and how to be effective in evangelism.
2. For Christians to learn to overflow with gratitude in their everyday lives. The series helps the individual learn to experience and enjoy a stable, consistent walk with Christ.
3. For Christians to be instructed. This implies that training must take place before individuals develop into the kind of Christian lay people whose lives will have an impact on their communities.

Important

1. Leader's Guide

It is important for one person to act as the leader during each group meeting. This may be the same person each time or the responsibility may be shared by two or three group members (preferably those who previously have gone through the course themselves).

This leader's guide is based on extensive use of *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family* and the other two books in *The 2:7 Series*. It is imperative for the group leader to use this leader's guide material every week as part of his or her careful preparation. The leader's guide is filled with proven principles, methods, and suggestions. Using it can significantly lighten the preparation load for a group leader.

2. Leader Training

In late 2011 or early 2012 leader training segments will be coming available on *The 2:7 Series* website: www.2-7series.org. For future announcements please look under the tab "2:7 Group Leaders" where these leader's guides are available for you to download.

Group Size

The professionals in the field of small group discussions say that 4-8 people make for the best discussions. For this course, **plan for up to 10 participants in your group**—not including yourself. You may find it necessary to have more. Just remember that each person over 10 diminishes the impact of this training material. It is wiser to break a group of 12 or more into two groups whenever possible. Your only limitation may be the number of qualified group leaders available.

Study Books

It is imperative that each person in your group has his or her own copy of *Growing Strong in God's Family*. People should write their name or use an address label on the line at the top of page 3.

Each person will be expected to do homework every week. It is motivational for individuals to complete their own work and fill in their own answers. By the end of the course, *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family* will have become a valued possession and will be a personal reference book for many years to come. With this in mind, suggest that the members of your group make neat and legible entries as they go through the course.

The Challenge Continues...

The following guidelines should be of great value in helping you effectively lead your group in *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family*. You want to refer to these guidelines often as you lead your group through the course.

Seeing Lives Strengthened and Deepened

During Books 2 and 3 your group members will experience:

1. Solid spiritual growth through consistency in quiet time, Bible study, and Scripture memory.
2. Foundational ministry training through study, discussion, and individual field assignments.

This leader's guide is not the final authority on how to lead your group. Each leader and each group is unique. But the information included here offers you valuable help!

Remember that *The 2:7 Series* is only a means to an end. These are excellent and proven materials. However, printed materials and programs do not produce disciples. *Only a disciple can make a disciple*. It is imperative that you practice what you teach. As you know, only as the Spirit of God uses the Word of God (the Bible) in a life can there be significant and lasting transformation.

These concepts should guide your thinking as you help each member of your group grow and deepen in their spiritual maturity in Christ. You may see your own spiritual life and ministry skills take on new dimensions as you facilitate this discipleship training.

Goals as Group Leader

You have two long-range goals when helping people become functioning disciples:

1. To help each person become a more mature disciple of Jesus Christ
2. To equip each person with tools and know-how for winning and training others.

Your leadership gives each person in your group the opportunity to develop the qualities, habits, and disciplines that will mark him or her as a man or woman of God. They will be growing in their relationships both with God and with other people.

Members of your group also need to be encouraged to share (with people outside of your group) things they are learning during the group sessions and what they are experiencing in their daily walk with God.

Evaluating Your Leadership

The following questions for evaluating leadership are for your own personal reflection. In your group listen for answers to some of these questions, but you don't want to insert discussions about these topics on top of the assignments in the *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family* workbook.

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|--------|---|
| Who? | Who am I serving? Who are the people in my group? Do I really know them? |
| What? | What are my goals for <i>Deepening Your Roots in God's Family</i> , and what are my goals for each session? What needs and expectations do my group members have? |
| Where? | Where am I in my own Christian life? Where am I taking this group? |
| Why? | Why am I leading this group? Why is each person in my group? |
| When? | When will we reach our goals? When will I spend time socially with members of my group? |
| How? | How do we achieve our goals? |

Getting Organized

1. **When** will your group meet? Since you need an hour and a half for each session in the *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family* study, the Sunday school hour is usually not long enough to schedule *2:7 Series* training. So when should you meet? Your final decision may involve some sacrifice on your part—you may have to give up a night or an afternoon each week that you wanted to save for yourself. But, you've decided to serve this group, so find out what time is best for your group.

Consider such things as the types of jobs your group members have. For example, those with construction jobs or other outside work may prefer not to meet in the early evening. But people who commute to work early in the morning may not want to be out late at night. Couples with young children may have days or times that are easiest for them to find baby-sitters. Assess your group's needs and encourage each member to be willing to compromise some if necessary.

2. **Where** will you meet—at church, in your home, in the homes of other group members, or somewhere else? You may find that a rotating system is best, in which you take turns going to each other's homes. This allows everyone to share the responsibility for hosting the group, and it also divides the driving time.

Whatever you work out, try to find comfortable surroundings that encourage group involvement. You will have from eight to twelve people who need room to interact in a relaxed way. You want to sit in a circle or oval so you can see each other and talk easily with one another. There are times when the group divides briefly into twos or threes.

3. What about **refreshments**? Let the group decide how much effort, if any, they want to give to this. Preparing refreshments shouldn't become a burden to anyone. Be sure to keep them simple.

4. The presence of **children** during the meeting can be a distraction. What arrangements do your group members need to make for baby-sitting?

5. Should you plan for informal **socializing** before the scheduled meeting time, with the group arriving early for this? Or would they prefer to begin the session when they arrive, and use the time afterward for refreshments and talking? Discuss this and set a policy that will help them plan when to arrive and how long to stay.

Handling Potential Problems

Your group may face a few of the problems listed here. By considering them in advance, you will be better able to deal with them if they occur.

- Frequent absences
- Frequent tardiness
- Lack of preparation
- Lack of motivation
- Difficulties in relating to each other or to you
- Members who drop out
- Varying degrees of expectations and interest
- Members who seem to monopolize the group's time
- Considerations that require changing your regular meeting time
- Couples in which the husband and wife seem to be going different directions in their interests and expectations
- Members who are experiencing "dry" periods in their spiritual lives

Difficulties such as these will not simply go away. You can deal with them in an attitude of love and concern. Here are several suggestions:

1. Talk alone with the persons involved. Share with them your concern and your desire for their success.
2. Establish a satisfactory agreement with the persons involved or with the group as a whole. This will make them accountable to each other.
3. Share some concerns with the entire group. Point out your goals of this discipleship training and your wanting them to pursue these goals. You can do this in a positive, encouraging way.
4. Give occasional "locker room chats"—as a coach would with his or her team—you remind, challenge, encourage, and sometimes correct—briefly and in a positive way.

5. Feel free to talk seriously about relevant biblical principles that deal with problems you face with your group.
6. Seek outside help from your pastor or from other mature Christians when necessary.

Getting Together

1. **Start and end on time.** Most people appreciate punctuality. Don't allow the time to get away from you at the end. You want the group to be eager to return next week.
2. Try to **involve each group member** in the discussions.
3. **Avoid embarrassing anyone.** Some may feel uncomfortable at first in such activities as reading aloud, praying aloud or group discussions.
4. As the leader, **participate** in all the activities. A new group especially needs to see your example.
5. Be sure any **instructions** you give are clearly understood.
6. Be yourself. Use the outlines given in the leader's guide for each session, but **don't be mechanical** about it.
7. **Come prepared.** The others will be discouraged if you do not seem to know what you are doing, especially after they have taken time themselves to prepare.
8. Have your **goals clearly in mind** for each session.

Between Meetings

Your commitment to the group includes more than just the giving of your time during the group session itself. Accomplishing your goal of developing disciples requires additional activities on your part.

1. Establish a **genuine friendship** with those in your group. If possible get to know them outside of your time in the group. Strong friendships make your group sessions more productive. During *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family* have one or two social activities as a group—like having a simple potluck before one of your sessions. Have fun together.
2. **Pray regularly** for each person in your group. Ask them to pray for one another.
3. **Keep growing** as a Christian? Effective spiritual leaders are continuing to grow in their own lives.
4. Follow your **priorities**. Keep your personal relationship with God and your responsibilities to your family in order as you have a discipleship ministry to others.

Reading and Marking Assignments

In many of the assignments we ask 2:7 participants to **read and mark certain sections** of the material. An example is *Relationship Evangelism* on pages 26-33. The benefit for them and for the group is that when those pages are discussed, each student can see what he or she has marked and **can quickly come up with things to share in the group**—not having to nervously search through those several pages.

From time to time remind your students of the value of marking as they read. It makes it easier for them to prepare to participate.

Read Around the Circle

In many of the 2:7 sessions individuals are asked to read aloud from their books. In Session 1 you say something like, “On page 11, let’s read through some of this important information. Let’s start with Andy and go to the left. Andy, would you read the first paragraph and the titles A through E?” After Andy reads, you say “thank you.” Then: “Susan, would you read those next two short paragraphs? After each one reads, just say “thank you” and make eye contact with the next reader—often eye contact is enough and you don’t have to say anything.

Experience has shown that “reading around the circle” is a simple, efficient way to get things read aloud. It takes a load off of you, the facilitator, and the group grows in its ability to self-manage these reading sections. There are sections of the 2:7 materials that are not mentioned in the assignments. This is planned because it allows a change of pace in your group meeting and the 2:7 participants grow in their verbal skills. These are tiny steps that move them toward their being able to lead a 2:7 group or Bible study group in the future.

Group-Participant-centered, Not Leader-centered

In *The 2:7 Series* you lead as a facilitator, not a teacher. Let the material carry the load. You don’t have to manage and direct—you facilitate. You want to hear their voices most of the time, not your voice. You sit as part of the circle and participate as one of the group. When the group is reading aloud around the circle, take your turn. But as leader you may want to underscore things that are important or clarify things that are not understood. Many questions you are asked can be directed back to the group. Other questions you may choose to answer outright—and move on.

Prepare your lesson as a participant in the group. Then prepare your lesson as the leader of the group. Have in mind the sections where you discuss material they have read and marked—you want to discuss one segment at a time. Have in mind the sections where you will have them read around the circle. In some of the Bible studies you might have a follow-up question or two that you ask after someone gives an answer to each of those questions.

Perspective on Deepening Your Roots in God’s Family

In *Deepening Your Roots in God’s Family* you are building on the training your people received in *Growing Strong in God’s Family*. Their capacities have increased since they started Book 1. Here in Book 2 they will meet new challenges that will stretch them a bit. Though there is more work to do in Book 2, many who have gone through this training say that it was easier for them to complete the assignments in Book 2 than it was for them in Book 1. The work they do on developing their salvation testimony (“My story”) is often the highlight of this training—and they are encouraged by new insights into themselves and their spiritual journey. As with Book 1,

this course only impacts a life to the degree that the Holy Spirit works in and through the materials, the Word of God, and the influence people in the group have on one another.

Goals for *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family*

Discipleship is both life and ministry. It is what we are and what we do. There are two general objectives for Book 2: (1) to continue to develop those in your group in their relationship with Christ—so that each individual has a more consistent and closer walk with the Lord; (2) to increase their perspective and skills regarding relationship evangelism. During Book 2 you want to help the members of your group to accomplish the following:

1. To develop consistent and meaningful quiet times that include Bible reading, prayer, and writing in *My Reading Highlights*.
2. To memorize at least the first six verses of the *Topical Memory System*.
3. To review regularly the five or six verses they memorized in Book 1.
4. To study and discuss five Bible studies on keys to a vital Christian life.
5. To study and discuss the article *My Heart Christ's Home* by Robert Boyd Munger.
6. To give a personal salvation testimony in less than four minutes, using a written outline.
7. To participate in one relating activity with a non-Christian acquaintance or friend.

Flowchart for *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family*

This flowchart shows how various aspects of the Christian life are emphasized in Book 2, *Deepening Your Roots in God's Family*.

Bible Study

- “Bible study in Book 2”—Session 1.
- Completing and discussing:
 - “Maturing in Christ”—Session 2
 - “Spiritual Warfare”—Session 3
 - “Faith and the Truths of God”—Session 4
 - “Knowing God's Will”—Session 5
 - “Walking as a Servant”—Session 6

Prayer

- Prayer is a regular ingredient in all eleven sessions.
- “Practical Suggestions on Prayer”—Session 1
- Choose whether to memorize one or two TMS verses on prayer—Session 5
- Study and discuss *How to Spend a Day in Prayer* by Lorne C. Sanny—Session 10
- Experience an extended time with God—Session 11

Scripture Memory

- The TMS in Book 2—Session 1
- “Principles for Memorizing Scripture”—Session 1
- “Scripture Memory Principles Quiz”—Session 2
- Memorizing 6-12 “Live the New Life” verses from the TMS —Sessions 2-8

Quiet Time

- Sharing from *My Reading Highlights*—Sessions 2-6 and 10

Evangelism and Witness

- “Suggestions for Developing Friendships with Non-Christians”—Session 6
- Several guidelines and suggestions for preparing “My Story”—Session 7
- “Lead-In to “My story” and “Ways to close “My Story”—Session 9
- Enjoy a relating activity with a non-Christian acquaintance or friend—by Session 11
- Tell “My Story” from an outline in less than four minutes—by Session 11

Lordship

- Bible study on “Maturing in Christ”—Session 2
- Choose whether to memorize one or two verses on “Christ the Center”—Session 2
- Choose whether to memorize one or two verses on “Obedience to Christ”—Session 3
- Study and discuss “*My Heart Christ’s Home* by Robert Boyd Munger—Session 9

How to Make the Bible Study Discussions Effective

Group Leader Resource Material

It is important for you to carefully prepare, so you can do a good job of leading each of the Bible study discussions. The following material has been compiled to assist you in handling the five Bible study group discussions.

Usually each of the 11 sessions in *Deepening Your Roots in God’s Family* is led by the same group leader. Because of a group leader’s being sick, traveling, or some other contingency, it may become necessary for someone else from the group to take a turn leading one of the 11 sessions. The group leader for sessions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6—will lead a Bible study discussion as well as facilitating the other course activities. Each time you prepare to lead, you will find it helpful to review the suggestion in this section.

Student Preparation

A key ingredient to stimulating and beneficial Bible study discussions is for each member in the group to have his or her Bible study completed before coming to class.

From time to time remind the members of the group how important it is (for you and for them) to have the Bible study done prior to the group meeting. If people come without the study

completed or partially finished, don't ignore or punish them with non-verbal looks of disapproval. Make them feel accepted and as much a part of the group as the others. It is important for those people to enjoy and benefit from the group discussion and not be made to feel rejected and unaccepted. At the beginning of the discussion you might assign such a person one or two questions that can be quickly prepared and ready for discussion when you get to that part of the lesson.

Group Leader Preparation

First, prepare the Bible study for your own enlightenment and application. Ask God to speak to you and to strengthen you from the study as you begin to work on it. You want correct and good answers without being academic and theoretical. If you get excited about the topic of the study and its content, you are well on your way to being an exciting and animated group leader.

Second, look over your questions and answers. Think of the needs and interests in your group. To which parts of the study should you give more attention? Thinking through and planning in advance can make for a more effective Bible study discussion. During the actual Bible discussion you may find it wise to deviate from your original plan. Thoughtful preplanning gives you a general direction in which to move, but you must remain flexible and willing to adjust your original plan.

The Bible Says . . .

In your group you want people sharing what the Bible teaches, not opinions and conjectures. On one hand we don't want people to be afraid of making theological mistakes. On the other hand we don't want people sharing opinions and hearsay without a passage of Scripture. Mostly, this problem can be alleviated by sticking with the verses, questions, and answers in the Bible study. Don't let the discussion drift into tangents where you and the group members have not done your homework. Each week stick with the subject at hand.

Several Helpful Discussion Guidelines

1. *Sit in a circle.* This is the best seating arrangement. Each person has eye contact with most of the people in the group. It creates an informal and warm atmosphere. The group leader is considered more of a peer because he or she is not placed in a prominent physical location.
2. *Don't dominate.* As the leader, you are both a facilitator and a participant in the group. You should not talk more than others in the group. As the facilitator you give direction and ask questions. As a participant you share your insights and study answers along with the others. Share humbly, not expertly.
3. *Not the authority.* Avoid becoming the authority figure in the group. You don't want all the questions directed to you with the others thinking that you should be able to

answer them. Direct questions back to the group. Say something like, “That is an interesting question. What thoughts might some of you have that would help us answer that question?” Sometimes you might recruit a volunteer who will take a difficult question to the pastor or an associate pastor. The volunteer can come back to the group with an answer the following week.

4. *Work together.* Your role as group leader is not a teaching responsibility, just as the student’ role is not to sit, listen, and take notes. You and the group members are working together to find answers and clarify issues.
5. *Too talkative.* You may soon find that one or two people in your group will have something to say about everything. Chat with them on the side. Say something like, “You have some great ideas. You are excellent in the discussion times. I need your help. There are others in the group who need to talk more so they can grow in confidence. Could you help me in getting some of these people to talk more? Before you talk in the group, let one or two others go first. Don’t be afraid of silence. It sometimes takes some silence before (name) and (name) will talk. Maybe you could share only your best thoughts in the group. Thank you for your help in this!”
6. *Too quiet.* When you direct a question to the group, give the quiet people more eye contact. Sometimes ask one of your less vocal people to read a quotation or to answer a specific question. They will become secure as they talk more. A number of things in the general structure of *Deepening Your Roots in God’s Family* are designed to build confidence and help people participate more comfortably. Reading around the circle helps bring people out of their shells. Quoting verses and working on *My Completion Record* in groups of two or three each week also nurture a growing confidence and security.
7. *Acknowledge answers.* Thank people when they participate. Thank them for reading a paragraph or answering a question. This is particularly important with those who tend to be quiet. An acknowledgment doesn’t always have to be verbal. Many times it can be a nod of the head or eye contact that communicates approval. As you apply this, others in the group will follow your example and begin doing it, too.
8. *Ask the group.* Usually you will address your questions to the group, not to an individual. (An exception to this would be to ask a quiet person a specific question.) As you ask a question, let your eye contact sweep around the group. Don’t let your eyes lock on to one person.

9. *Get several answers.* After one person has given an answer to a Bible study question, you will usually ask for one or two other people to give their answers to the same question. This allows several people to participate on each question. It also helps insure that the answers reflect a correct handling of that particular Scripture passage.

A simple question should be answered by only one or two people. A more difficult question could be answered by three or four people. Thought and application questions could be answered by half of the group or more if you wish. Have people read their answers exactly the way they have written them down. This keeps things moving. After they have read their written answer they may wish to express an additional ad lib sentence or two for clarification.

10. *Application and Summary questions.* In the *Deepening Your in God's Family* Bible studies you will find a sprinkling of application and summary questions. When you discuss the answer to these questions, give them priority. You may consider some questions important enough to ask several to give their answer. For some questions you may ask every person in your group to share their answer.

This is not a comprehensive list—but these are a few examples:

- Page 23, question 13 (some answer it with application and others with summary)
- Page 36, question 10 (summary question)
- Page 42, question 4 (some answer it with application and others with summary)
- Page 43, question 7 (application question)
- Page 55, question 2c (application question)
- Page 58, question 11 (application question)

The “Think About” Questions

You may have observed that there is a “Think About” question at the beginning of each of the last six Bible studies. Remind the group members to give two or three minutes of thought to the “Think About” question before starting to prepare their Bible study. Its purpose is to get the mind moving in the direction that the Bible study topic will be going. In your group meeting you can have several give their answer to the “Think About” question just before you move into discussing the actual Bible study content. This moves people’s minds away from their busy day into the subject you are about to discuss.

You will notice that there are no correct or “school” answers to “Think About” questions. They are designed to stimulate thinking and to precipitate a wide range of answers.

How to Lead the Bible Study Discussion

In the eight Bible studies, your goal will be to have every question answered by at least one person. When an answer is simple and straightforward, you can usually move right on to the next question. More complex answers generate a variety of comments from others. You may see an area of special interest surface. That may lead to your having to invest more time

discussing that topic. During this course, as the group leader will probably use both of the following methods for leading discussion.

1. Question-by-question—sharing in sequence. Go around the circle and in turn have each person answer one question or sub-question. You are going through the questions in order.

(You may want to review items 8 and 9 on page 10.) For most groups it is wise to **use this first method at least through Session 4** here in Book 2. You will find that often people new to Bible study discussion prefer this first approach because of its predictability.

As you go around the circle, also ask people read aloud the quotations and paragraphs between questions.

When you start the discussion, tell the group where you want them to begin in the circle and whether you want them to go to the left or to the right. Don't always start in the same place or always go in the same direction. Share your answer or read a quotation when it is your turn.

2. Question-by-question—sharing at random. In this method do not go around the circle in sequence, but still answer the Bible study questions in order. Work on a volunteer basis. (For example, "Knowing God's Will" (pages 48-52). You might ask, "Would someone please read the opening paragraph?" Someone says, "I will," and reads it. Then you ask the group to interact on the "Think About" question.

Then ask, "Who will answer question 1 for us please?" Someone reads question 1 and gives their answer. (One or two others may have a comment on question 1.) Continue on with question 2, then, question 3. You might have the quotations and paragraphs read in between questions as you did in the previous method.

Occasionally quieter students in the group may need to be asked something like, "John, would you answer question 7 for us please?" Then go back to the volunteer approach again. Still apply "Ask the group" and "Get several answers" (pages 9 and 10 above).

As you feel comfortable with this approach, use it in Book 2. In the leader's guide for Sessions 2-6 you are given some additional Bible study discussion questions. Use them sparingly. You cannot ask one of these questions until after someone in the group has given an answer to the question for which you have an additional discussion question. If your group responds to them, you may wish to use them more in future sessions.

You can effectively lead the discussions by only using these two methods—even without using the additional discussion questions. Here is a brief explanation if you wish to try out a few of the additional questions.

One of these additional questions should only be asked after a 2:7 book question has been answered. For example: Please look at question 6 on page 50. Perhaps two people give an answer to the Psalm 143:8 question. Then we can ask the question 6 additional question provided for you on page xx: "How frequently do you feel a person should pray for guidance from God?" There is not correct answer to this type of question, but it stimulates and promotes a deeper discussion on the issue at hand. After a brief discussion of "frequency," continue where you left off in the lesson.

Preparing to Lead Book 2

Don't neglect your own planning, even though the outlines in this guide for each group session are fairly detailed. Become familiar now with the overall thrust of the course, the goals toward which you are working, and the schedule for completing the specifics of the course.

Some things to plan for as you begin Book 2:

1. One or two members in your group may not have finished every *My Completion Record* item in Book 1, *Growing Strong in God's Family*. All members of your group should complete that work before starting Book 2. Challenge a person to finish quickly. You or someone in your group may need to help the person complete those final requirements.
2. What can you do to reinforce the use of what was learned in Book 1? Build some checks and review times into Book 2 to continue what the group has already learned. Occasionally discuss the *Beginning with Christ* verses and continue to use *My Reading Highlights*.
3. Encourage group members to complete the requirements soon for reviewing the *Beginning with Christ* verses for 14 consecutive days.
4. Book 2 introduces the personal salvation testimony ("My Story"). Be sure you are well prepared to:
 - a. Give your own testimony in about four minutes.
 - b. Explain the principles of testimony preparation (as needed).
 - c. Organize the workshop in Session 8 for each person in your group sharpening their "My Story."
 - d. Encourage and help group members with their testimony preparation.
 - e. Constructively critique each person's preparation and presentation of his or her "My Story."
5. The extended time with God in Session 11 may be the most significant experience for you group during Book 2. Make sure you have studied and practiced the principles and procedures involved.
6. Since Session 11 is devoted entirely to the extended time with God, it can't be used for work on other items on *My Completion Record*.
7. Remind your group that all Bible study questions and the questions on pages 91-92 (*My Heart Christ's Home*) should have written answers before these items are signed on *My Completion Record*.

The Format for Sessions 1-11 in Book 2: The leader's guide is organized so you will find the following things explained for each of the eleven sessions:

- The specific goal or goals you seek to attain during each session.
- Specific recommendations on how to lead each point on the session outline.
- Occasionally reminders which are designed to prompt your memory about the things you will be working on with your group.

Session 1

Book 2

GOALS FOR SESSION 1

- To make sure each student knows what will be expected in Book 2.
- To increase the students' motivation for Scripture memory and to lay additional groundwork for their continued success.
- To enhance their prayer life by introducing them to the use of *Prayer Sheets*.

1. Open the session in prayer

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Review the goals of Book 1 in The 2:7 Series (page 9).

a. If your present group combines people from two or more *Growing Strong in God's Family* groups, be sure to spend a few minutes getting acquainted. Go around the Circle and have each person answer the following questions, or any relational questions you choose.

- (1) What is your name?
- (2) What is your occupation?
- (3) What is your favorite hobby?

b. Before going over “Reviewing the Goals of Book 1 in *The 2:7 Series*, on page 9, briefly discuss these questions: What did group members expect when they began *Growing Strong in God's Family*? In what ways did they actually benefit?

Turn to page 9 and take turns reading aloud each of the goals listed there. Comment briefly on most of the eight statements, speaking positively about your group's achievements in *Growing Strong in God's Family*.

3. Preview Book 2 (pages 7-8).

Convey a sense of excitement as you lead the group in looking over *My Completion Record* on pages 7-8. Instead of mentioning possible difficulties, help them anticipate the benefits that will become theirs by successfully completing these requirements.

Point out that in addition to memorizing 6-12 new verses, they need to keep track of their review of the *Beginning with Christ* verses—so they accumulate 14 consecutive days of BWC review. Comment on the value of their new verses being on *The Wheel Illustration* topics.

As they learn new verses they will need to continue getting them initialed on *My Completion Record*. Beginning with this course, husbands and wives may sign for each other. (You remember that it was not allowed in Book 1.)

The group will take two scripture memory quizzes on pages 19 and 46-47. The first is an in-class activity. The second involves taking and checking the quiz on their own.

In quiet times and Bible study, they follow the same procedures learned in *Growing Strong in God's Family*.

Book 2 gives some attention to three facets of witnessing by helping each person in the group:

- Prepare a personal salvation testimony.
- Discuss Relationship Evangelism.
- Participate in one non-spiritual activity with a non-Christian.

For now, mention only the general scope of these three requirements without going into detail.

Two exciting parts of Book 2 are *My Heart Christ's Home* and *How to Spend a Day in Prayer*. Both are very helpful and stimulating.

4. Memorize the same translation as they did in Book 1?

Just touch on this. Usually everyone memorizes in the same translation that they did in Book 1. Often the exception is someone who in Book 1 memorized a version that is not the prominently used version in their church

5. Survey "Scripture Memory Guide—Week One" (page 10).

Go through the basic format of these instructions, touching on major points. Then have group members read aloud page 10 up through the top of page 11. Make a brief comment after each section is read. You might want to have a few in your group give one reason why they want to memorize Scripture. This can be helpful and motivational.

Remind them that six memory verses are required and that the other six are recommended but are optional. All twelve verses are listed on page 11.

Urge them to read and follow the Scripture Memory Guide each week. The memory suggestions help them avoid obstacles and lead them into successful and meaningful memorization and review.

6. Read "The TMS in Book 2" and "Bible Study in Book 2" (pages 11-12).

Have them read aloud around the circle or as volunteers. Make your comments during the process of the reading. When you cover the Scripture memory material on page 12 reinforce the concept that they are really giving themselves a gift if they memorize all 12 verses rather than six. They are in an ideal environment for planting verses in their minds that will benefit them for a lifetime. Hundreds—actually it has

been thousands—who found that by applying Scripture memory principles they were able to memorize the 12 verses in Book 2 more easily than memorizing five or six verses in Book 1.

After reading through “Bible study in Book 2” you might comment on how these five studies cover some indispensable foundational issues in the Christian life.” Remind your group to use a translation when doing Bible study—not a paraphrase. Authors of paraphrases sometimes make inaccurate interpretations which reflect their biases. Standard translations are more objective and accurate.

7. Read and discuss “Principles for Memorizing Scripture” (page 13).

This page is “pure gold.” These principles build on the Scripture memory guidelines they learned in Book 1, pages 24-25. Any problem with Scripture memory inevitably results from a neglect of one or more of these 14 principles.

8. Discuss “Practical Suggestions on Prayer” (pages 14-15).

a. A SUGGESTED PRAYER FORMAT: ACTS OR CATS

You might say something like: “What we are going to look at now is one format we can use for prayer. It is not something that we will want to use every day or it can lose its vitality. This is the type of format we may wish to use for a week or two, discontinue it for a while, and then use it again later.”

Have various group members look up the verses listed. After each verse is read aloud, have the students write down a summary of that verse in the space provided. After they have written down their two summary statements on “Adoration,” discuss “Adoration” very briefly. Do the same with the other three prayer topics.

It is good to ask for comments and questions at the end of any segment of instruction.

b. USING PRAYER SHEETS

Have the “Using Prayer Sheets” (pages 14-15) material read aloud. The sample on page 15 is someone’s actual Prayer Sheet. Point out how the requests and answers were clearly stated and dated. Some of the requests have been already answered and some have yet to be answered.

Sometimes a person may feel led to stop praying about a request or may adjust it in some way. It would be wise to pray for a request at least for a week before making such changes.

9. Read the “Assignment for Session 2” (page 16).

Have someone read the assignment. The main point to stress is their preparation for the “Scripture Memory Principles Quiz.” They need to pass this to graduate. They aren’t required to quote the principles (on page 13) verbatim on the quiz, but they do

need to be able to write down the main ideas. They want to be prepared to write down more than six.

10. Close the session in prayer.

Ask for two or three to close the time with prayer. (You don't assign them. They just "chime in" voluntarily when heads are bowed). Ask for prayer about the success of each one in the group and for life-time benefits coming out of working through Book 2.

Session 2**Book 1****GOALS FOR SESSION 2**

- To reinforce the group interaction skills learned in Growing Strong in God's Family in the areas of scripture memory review, quiet time sharing, Bible study discussion, and prayer.
- To explore together some of what the Scriptures teach about Christian maturity.
- To encourage prayer for non-Christian acquaintances.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

In the groups they review their "Christ the Center" verses, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20 (recommended but optional), and their Book 1 memory verses. Encourage your group into the pattern of working on verse review and getting things signed on *My Completion Record* right after the opening prayer of each session.

Remind couples to split up—and to be in different groups for review. Get a show of hands to see how many are memorizing in each of the different versions. This enables those using the same translation to pair up for review.

Ask group members how the "Scripture Memory Guide—Week 2" helped them. How many days did it take to memorize a verse? It is good for them to have a verse pack. Suggest that they add a card to their verse cards that has their name, cell and e-mail information so someone can reach them in case they lose their verse pack.

3. Share quiet time thoughts.

Strive to keep enthusiasm high for this activity each week. Let the group know how much *My Reading Highlights* has helped you personally. As the leader, begin the sharing. Work at keeping the sharing brief and to the point. Encourage them to share only what they have written on *My Reading Highlights*. Usually everyone will share each week, but don't make it compulsory. Be sure to casually thank each one who shares.

4. Complete the “Scripture Memory Principles Quiz” (page 19). Have the group briefly look over the principles on page 13 before taking the quiz. They may begin taking the quiz as soon as they have done their brief review. Suggest that they write down more than six items— possibly eight or ten to ensure that they get at least six correct. They do not have to quote the principles verbatim. They simply need to communicate the intent or thought of the principles.

After several have completed the work, you can say something like, “As soon as you have finished your quiz, please exchange with someone else and correct each other’s paper. You may wish to refer to page 13 as you correct someone’s paper. Feel free to sign each other off on *My Completion Record* after you have passed this quiz. You may do that now or at the end of the class.”

5. Discuss the continued use of the Evangelism Prayer List.

Ask everyone to get out their *Evangelism Prayer List* if they have it with them. Ask what they are learning. Are they adding or dropping any names? What sort of things are they praying for the people on their list? How consistent have they used their Evangelism Prayer List? What other insights or comments do they have?

You aren’t lecturing them if they haven’t been using it. You are affirming those who have—you are all learning together as people share how they have used the list.

6. Survey the Scripture Memory Guide—Week 2 (pages 17-18).

They have studied this. Just ask them to summarize some of the key points on page 17. Then, ask them to share what they consider key points on page 18?

7. Discuss the Bible study “Maturing in Christ” (pages 19-24). You must be completely familiar with the questions and answers in the material you will lead. This helps you to be excited about what you are discussing and to pass your excitement on to the others.

Begin by having one or two group members read aloud the introductory material on page 19. Next, let the group “brain storm” some possible answers to the “Think About” question. Allow several to share. If the answers are brief, a person could share more than once. Spend just two or three minutes on this question. (Remember that there is a “Think About” question at the beginning of every Bible study. Its purpose is to get the members of the group to focus their minds on the subject of the Bible study). Then proceed by having people share their answers (perhaps around the circle) as you continue through the study. It is often good to have someone read aloud the quotations and the section introductions as you come to them in the lesson.

Do a thorough job of personal preparation on your Bible study each week. First, answer the questions for your own growth and benefit. Then, as you prepare to lead the study, choose which sections you will probably emphasize because of the

specific interests and needs you are aware of in your group. At the end of the study, you might ask what was most meaningful to them.

These Leader's Guides provides you with additional discussion questions for each Bible study. Remember, you may ask an additional question only after someone in the group has answered the original Bible study question. For example (see below), after someone has given his or her answer to question 8a on page 22, you may then ask, "What do you feel that verse 3 means, 'now that you have tasted that the Lord is good?'" Most additional questions are "understanding questions" that drive the discussion deeper.

Additional Discussion Questions for "Maturing in Christ":

Question 8	1 Peter 2:2-3	What do you feel verse 3 mean, "Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good?"
Question 8	Hebrews 5:13-14	What do you think must happen for a person to go beyond "milk" to "solid food?"
Question 12	2 Peter 1:5-7	How many of these do you think God works on at a time in our life?
Question 12	2 Peter 1:8-11	What do you think it means to be "ineffective" and "unproductive?"

8. Read the "Assignment for Session 3" (page 24).

Have someone read the assignment for Session 3. Encourage them to stay on top of their Scripture memory work in these early weeks.

9. Close the session in prayer.

Have several people lead briefly in prayer focusing on people from your *Evangelism Prayer Lists*. Remind them to pray for one another during the week.

Session 3

Book 2

GOALS FOR SESSION 3

- To emphasize the importance of obedience in our relationship with God. (The Scripture memory verses emphasizes obedience.)
- To clarify the issues involved in relationship evangelism.
- To become aware of the spiritual warfare around us.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

They can complete outline points #2 and #3 while they are in verse review groups. In the groups they review their verses on “Obedience to Christ,” Romans 12:1 and John 14:21 (recommended but optional).

As they acquire more Scripture memory verses, it helps if you allow them more review time. Always affirm their good work.

3. Quote the verses learned in Book 1.

Encourage your people to keep their Book 1 memory cards with their cards for Book 2. As you know, during Book 1 some will have memorized five verses and others will have memorized six.

4. Share quiet time thoughts.

As the group leader, you should almost always share a quiet time thought that is both simple and encouraging. You don’t want to get a spiraling competition going as to who can share the deepest truth during the quiet time sharing.

Remember to give them a few seconds to look over their *My Reading Highlights* to determine what they want to share. It is often better for someone to share briefly twice than to share once at length. As they learn to share thoughts from The Scriptures briefly, they will carry this ability of being direct and brief into other areas of life.

5. Discuss observations from “Relationship Evangelism” (pages 26-33).

As you know, they have read and marked this article before coming to class. Discuss the material one section at a time. Take each section in the order it appears in the text. This is very important material. It lays the foundation for the “Witness” segments laid out in Book 2.

6. Discuss the Bible Study, “Spiritual Warfare” (pages 33-36).

Handle this much the same as last week. Discuss the “Think About” question to get started. Then, continue on through the study itself. **You will want to have each part of the Summary read aloud at the end of each study.** Avoid having a few people monopolize your discussions.

Continue to have group members read printed quotations and paragraphs when discussing the Bible study. Be sure you prepare well in advance and that your people are sharing applications.

Remember that you may ask an additional question only after someone has answered the original question. Ask an additional question to the whole group, not to an individual.

Additional Discussion Questions for “Spiritual Warfare”:

Question 1	2 Timothy 2:3-4	How can a person with a secular job keep from being entangled in “civilian pursuits?”
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Question 1	How does this balance with our being responsible to provide for our families?
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Question 3	Genesis 3:1-5	How does Satan use this same approach today?
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Question 6	How might more than one of these three be impacting our lives at the same time?
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7. Read the “Assignment for Session 4” (page 37).

Have someone read the assignment for Session 4. By Session 4 they will have been using *Prayer Sheets* for two weeks. Remind them that in Session 4 they will report on their experiences in using *Prayer Sheets*.

8. Close in prayer.

Have a time of brief conversational prayer. Make sure you have allowed enough time for unhurried conversational prayer. Your prayer times may become a major highlight of your weekly sessions. When praying conversationally, remember members of your group want to:

- Start praying—don’t share prayer requests.
- Cover only one topic at a time.
- Be brief. Sentence prayers are ideal.
- Be spontaneous. Don’t pray around the circle, but let each person pray for whatever interests him or her.

Session 4

Book 2

GOAL FOR SESSION 4

- To emphasize the importance of knowing The Scriptures and applying them to our lives.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

In the groups they review their verses on “The Word,” 2 Timothy 3:16 and Joshua 1:8 (recommended but optional). After group members have completed their review, you might want to ask, “What does ‘all Scripture is given by inspiration of God’ mean?” and “How do you meditate on God’s word day and night?” This will help everyone to think through the content of the verses. Keep this mini-discussion brief.

3. Share quiet time thoughts from *My Highlights Record*.

Continue to have each group member share from his or her *My Reading Highlights*—some weeks a person may share directly from what they marked in their Bible. Occasionally (probably not every week) you might comment or ask a question about something someone has shared. (Here you are talking to the group, but including the person who shared the thought). Several will usually join in the brief discussion that follows.

Don’t let this portion of the session drag. If there are some dead spots, call on someone. Occasionally call on those who hold back during sharing times. Make sure you are also sharing each week as a contributor to the group.

4. Discuss results from using Prayer Sheets.

In the assignment for Session 2, they were asked to start using *Prayer Sheets*. In Session 3 they were reminded that in Session 4 they would report on their experience in using *Prayer Sheets*. Also in the assignment for Session 4 they were asked to bring their *Prayer Sheets* with them to Session 4.

Our goals in this segment are:

- To discuss in what ways the *Prayer Sheets* were helpful.
- To see if there are any prayer answers they would like to share.
- To motivate them to use their *Prayer Sheets* regularly.

Simply ask, “What has been your experience in using a *Prayer sheet*?” They will share both problems and benefits.

Your attitude and purpose should not be to identify those who have not been using a *Prayer Sheet* and then rebuke them. This is simply an honest discussion where we can learn from one another. We want to discuss the benefits and the difficulties they have experienced in using a *Prayer Sheet*.

5. Discuss the Bible study, “Faith and the Truths of God” (pages 40-44).

As you begin, ask the two opening paragraphs to be read aloud.

Before you get into the Bible study questions and answers, have a brief discussion of the “Think About” question. Remember you are not looking for one “correct” answer to a “Think About” question. These questions are simply designed to stimulate discussion and to help the group focus on the subject at hand.

As you conclude the study, have several people participate in reading the various parts of the Summary.

Remember that you may ask an additional question only after someone has answered the original question. Ask an additional question to the whole group, not to an individual.

Additional Discussion Questions for “Faith and the Truths of God”:

Question 1 Hebrews 11: 1 How does faith influence prayer?

Question 2 How can we use our gifts, education, and experience without falling
I into one of these traps?

Question 4 Hebrews 11 Do the people in Hebrews 11 strike you as
spiritual giants or fairly average people?

Question 6 Hebrews 6:12 How do you think faith and patience are
related?

6. Read the “Assignment for Session 5” (page 44).

Have someone read the “Assignment for Session 5.”

7. Have a period of conversational prayer.

Have a period of brief conversational prayer. Occasionally you may divide into two groups for conversational prayer, perhaps sometimes with men and women in separate groups—or divide the group in half.

GOALS FOR SESSION 5

- To learn biblical principles and guidelines for determining the will of God.
- To continue to motivate class members in scripture memory by discussing the “Self-checking Quiz.”

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

In the groups they review their verses on “Prayer,” John 15:7 and Philippians 4:6-7 (recommended but optional).

This is a good time to ask if the students can still perfectly quote their Book 1 verses. Ask how they are doing in getting their verses signed off.

3. Briefly discuss the “Self-Checking Quiz” (pages 46-47).

Group members are coming to class having done the “Self-Checking Quiz.” Most of them will have already checked their answers. The correct answers are found at the bottom of page 47.

You will not lead every 2:7 group the same way. You need to know your group and will want to continue to evaluate where they are in their lives. There are two usual options for discussing the “Self-Checking Quiz” based on whether

- they need more encouragement and help in Scripture memory.
- they are strong in Scripture memory and have gleaned most of the benefit from the quiz when they did their homework.

If the group needs help and encouragement on Scripture memory, briefly review every question. Go around the circle and have each person read a question and answer aloud until you have gone through the whole quiz. This is excellent review! Keep the discussion moving along.

If your group is very strong in Scripture memory and unusually quick to learn, you may just review highlights from the quiz. Ask the group to share some of the questions and answers that express the most important Scripture memory guidelines—then you can move on.

4. Share quiet time thoughts from *My Reading Highlights*.

Ask if they are reading consecutively through one Bible book or if they are reading two (perhaps one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament).

Ask them how *My Reading Progress* is working for them. Ask how many have fourteen consecutive quiet times signed off. You will want this part of the session to last about 20 minutes. Should some interesting question or point of discussion come up, it could go longer, but you will want to keep your eye on the time.

5. Discuss the Bible study “Knowing God’s Will” (pages 48-52).

Draw out the quiet people. Give one of them eye contact as you ask a question. This will usually cause the person to respond with an answer. If that doesn’t work, you may sometimes need to call on a quiet person by name and ask him or her for an answer.

Remember that you may ask an additional question only after someone has answered the original question. Ask an additional question to the whole group, not to an individual.

Additional Discussion Questions for “Knowing God’s Will”:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|--|
| Question 1 | Ephesians 5:15-17 | How far into the future do you think we can know God’s will for us? |
| Question 4 | Matthew 6:33 | What are some ways we can seek God’s Kingdom? |
| Question 4 | Matthew 28:18-20 | How does evangelism fit into this passage? |
| Question 4 | | 2 Peter 3:18—What does it mean to “grow in grace?” What does it mean to “grow in knowledge?” |
| Question 6 | Psalms 143:8 | How frequently do you feel a person should pray for guidance from God? |
| Question 6 | James 1:5 | How do you think wisdom fits into knowing God’s will? |

6. Read the “Assignment for Session 6” (page 52).

Have someone read the assignment for Session 6.

7. Close in prayer.

Have a time of brief conversational prayer. This week, encourage the group to focus on people from their *Evangelism Prayer Lists*. You can enhance this time of prayer by asking them (or sharing with them) what to pray for a non-Christian.

Past 2:7 groups have “brainstormed” and came up with a number of things to pray for a non-Christian. Here are some of them.

- For a deepened friendship and open communication with the person.
- For circumstances that will draw the person toward the Lord.
- For protection from false teaching and cults.
- For a hunger to understand about God.
- For a willingness to admit problems and needs.
- That he or she might clearly understand the gospel when it is presented.
- That the Holy Spirit will be at work in the person’s spouse as well as in the person.
- That the person might see inconsistencies and error in the false religion in which he or she has been involved.
- That the person’s heart will continue to be prepared through things he or she sees, reads and hears: TV, magazines, circumstances and people.
- That he or she will see Christian families and/or individuals who model an attractive lifestyle.

Session 6

Book 2

GOALS FOR SESSION 6

- To monitor each person’s progress on the Completion Record.
- To deepen their commitment to be relating to non-Christians.
- To encourage them to be serving others.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

In the groups they review their verses on “Fellowship,” Hebrews 10:24-25 and 1 John 1:3 (recommended but optional).

After they have reviewed verses together, take five minutes for a brief discussion. Ask, “Where have you experienced or observed strong fellowship among believers in a group or between individuals? Can you give us an example or two?”

Have them get their verse card or open their Bible to Philippians 4:6-7. You can simply ask, “What are some of the things you see in Philippians 4:6-7 that you

particularly like or appreciate?” Do the same with 1 John 1:3. This should take about five minutes.

3. Share quiet time thoughts from *My Reading Highlights*.

You can begin by sharing something practical and specific. Once again, find out how they are doing in completing the 14 consecutive quiet times. Ask how they are enjoying reading the Bible. Have some brief comments about reading the Bible daily, and underscore the importance of consistency.

4. Read and discuss “Suggestions for Developing Friendships with non-Christians” (pages 54-55).

Have this material read aloud. If they both hear and see it, the impact is greater. You may ask them to read around the circle. It is less controlled and structured if you encourage any volunteer to continue the reading after the previous reader has stopped.

After someone reads the list of activity examples, ask the group, “What are some other ‘relating activities’ that come to mind? Let’s jot down a few more ideas in the margins on this page.” After several additional suggestions have been jotted down, continue the reading.

After the remainder of the material has been read, you can ask what other comments they would like to make about it. There may be one or two or none—then move on.

5. Discuss the Bible study, “Walking as a Servant” (pages 55-59).

Continue to do a good job in your own Bible study preparation. If God has really spoken to you during your preparation, it is probable that the discussion will be vital and meaningful to everyone.

Don’t try to force the people in your group to be excited about the same passages that impressed you. But, they will follow your pattern of enthusiastic sharing when it is their turn to share what impressed them from their Bible study preparation.

Remember that you may ask an additional question only after someone has answered the original question. Ask an additional question to the whole group, not to an individual.

Additional Discussion Questions for “Walking as a Servant”:

Question 1	Mark 10:45	What is the relationship between these two purposes for which Jesus came? (That is, to serve and to die)
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Question 4	Do you think it is easier to be God’s servant or to serve other people?
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Session 6

Book 1

Question 6	Acts 6:1-7	Why do you think the spiritual qualifications were so high for those who would serve tables?
Question 11	1 John 3:17	Do you think of serving and meeting people's needs as being the same thing? Why or why not?
Question 13	Luke 17:7-10	How does being proud differ from taking pride in your responsibilities?

6. Discuss a tentative time and place for Session 8.

In preparation for this planning time with your group, review the leader's guide material under Sessions 7 and 8.

A Christian education area in another church is often the best location. You can set it up so there are several tables in a "study hall" room. Then, you can locate yourself at the end of a table in a separate room with several chairs along one side of the table. As the students complete a draft of their testimony or have made corrections or improvements, they can come into your room and sit. They get ideas for their testimony as they hear your critique of other individuals.

Before Session 6 you may want to phone another church to see when their facility might be available so you can schedule Session 8. Some churches would have a financial charge for using part of their facility. Others would be happy to make an area available at no charge. Be sure there is a clear understanding. If you do not know a pastor or key lay person at another church, you may ask your pastor or Christian education director to phone the other church for you.

It is less desirable to have Session 8 at your own church, but it can work. An advantage of being at another church is that there are no rooms, bulletin boards, and other visual reminders that precipitate a whole parade of memories about people and events. It is often less distracting to be in another church.

Most groups choose to meet on a Saturday morning, a Saturday afternoon, or a Sunday afternoon.

7. Read the "Assignment for Session 7" (page 59).

Have someone read the assignment for Session 7.

Remind them of the importance and value of the next two class sessions. They need to carefully prepare the "My Story" assignment for Session 7! The better job they do in Session 7, the easier it will be for them to handle the extended testimony workshop in Session 8.

8. Close in prayer.

Have a time of brief conversational prayer. Concentrate on praying about activities for relating to non-Christians on their prayer lists.

Session 7

Book 2

GOAL FOR SESSION 7

- To help the group understand the ingredients of an effective personal salvation testimony. The preparation of “My Story” is one of the most significant but also challenging aspects of Book 2 and *The 2.7 Series*. Prepare carefully to lead this testimony segment.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

They quote all the verses they have learned up to this point in Book 2. Keep encouraging your people to stay current in their work. Frequent review is so important! Praise them for their progress. Keep a positive and optimistic atmosphere.

3. Read “Congratulations” (page 61).

Read aloud the “Congratulations” paragraph. You can do this or have someone else in your group read it. Compliment them for their hard work. Affirm them for their commitment to discipleship training.

4. Discuss the material on “My Story” preparation (pages 61-72).

Remember they have studied all of this testimony material in preparation for Session 7. As you turn from page to page in this salvation testimony material, discuss something under each major heading. You can simply ask what comments and questions they have when you discuss each of these major topics, one at a time. Whatever methods you use, make the discussion a time of summary, review and application.

Strike a balance between the extremes of going through the material too rapidly and belaboring every point and sub-point. You want this material to make a deep impression on each person in your group. Watch for their non-verbal responses during the discussion. You can spot facial expressions that reflect confusion or the desire to make a further comment.

a. **Why Prepare “My Story?”** (pages 61-62). Briefly review the value of using a personal testimony. One or two personal examples of how God has enabled you to use your personal testimony when witnessing would be encouraging to share with the group. You might also check to see how many in the group were witnessed to as a non-Christian by someone using their personal testimony.

b. **Preparing “My Story” General Comments** (pages 62-63). Your enthusiasm regarding this assignment is essential. Make sure you have thought through on the benefits of developing an effective personal testimony. Thousands of people have successfully developed their personal testimony using this material. Convey a positive, “you’ll do great,” attitude.

c. **The Grape Illustration** (page 64). A possible way to discuss *The Grape Illustration* might be to explore what the word “testimony” means, in both a secular and a Christian context. Come up with concrete examples of how we actually use the word in our everyday lives, such as a “testimony” in a court of law, “testimonials” for products being sold, and so on.

Say something like, “As we can see, this illustration shows a cluster of grapes, and each of the grapes illustrates a possible testimony. These are some of the subjects on which some of us could give personal testimonies of how God has worked in our lives. But there is one central testimony which is perhaps the most important and the most useful tool available to a Christian for use in spiritual ministry. That is the one with lines on it. Please write on the lines: **‘Salvation: how I received eternal life.’** (Repeat the statement until all have written it in.)

Mention that a salvation testimony is like the proverbial “lady’s basic black dress.” It can be dressed up to look fancy for a formal occasion, or it can be worn with few embellishments and look informal or even casual. The basic black dress is versatile, and so is the personal salvation testimony. In different circumstances, you can summarize it in only a few sentences, or expand it to include more details. It can be adapted to meet the specific interests and questions of the non-Christian with whom you are talking.

Emphasize that the testimony the “My Story” they are preparing in the coming weeks will be about personal salvation, and not about the other areas shown in the illustration. Then say something like this: “I think you’ll find preparing your testimony a meaningful and worthwhile exercise. It won’t be easy. It’s going to take some hard work. But it will be well worth it!”

d. **Effective “My Story” Preparation** (page 63-67). Briefly review “Outline for My Story” and “Guidelines for Preparing the More Specific Content,” (pages 63-66). Handle any questions as completely as you can. The better the group members understand the

“whys” and the “how’s” of writing out their “My Story,” the more productive their own preparation will be. These principles must be clearly understood by each person. These principles are the heart of their testimony preparation. Thoroughly cover “Developing the Before, How, and After Sections” (pages 66-67).

e. ***Two Ways You Might Organize Your Story*** (page 67-68). More than half of the 2:7 participants use the “Overview / Flashback” approach to organizing their salvation testimony story. This allows the person listening to the testimony to get acquainted with the testimony-giver before the story gets into spiritual issues. The dentist can say he or she is a dentist. Human interest can be inserted into the overview. It is a versatile approach. On the other hand, the straight chronological approach can be interesting and dynamic as well.

f. ***Choosing Your “My Story” Format***—with samples worksheets” (pages 68-76). Ask how many were able to select one of the three formats and complete their testimony worksheet. Then, ask how many still have some work to do on this assignment. Simply get a show of hands for each of these two questions. For those who yet have work to do, ask if they have been able to select one of the three formats. You and the group can spend a few minutes to help a person select one of the formats. Then you may need to allow time for some of your people to complete their testimony worksheet.

If all or most of your people have completed their testimony worksheet they can get started writing out their testimony. Most people are accustomed to putting things in writing to be read, not spoken. Encourage them to write their story using the vocabulary and structures they normally use in everyday conversation.

If you use part of this class session as a “study hall,” **be sure you allow about 10 minutes at the end of this segment to cover the rest of the class outline.**

5. Read “The Session 8 Workshop” (pages 76-77).

Ask someone to read this short section or read it yourself. Ask for any questions or comments.

6. Finalize the time and place for Session 8.

The workshop for Session 8 will require additional time and space for your group to spread out and work. Homes are not suitable for this type of workshop. Usually a church is better. Use tables which are convenient for writing. An evening meeting is usually not satisfactory, because people are tired. It is an option to consider, however.

You are usually the one responsible for the place. The group needs to help you decide on the time. Both of these issues have been discussed in Session 6 of

this Leader's Guide. This is the time to be sure everyone knows where to be and when they should be there for Session 8.

7. Discuss a tentative time and place for Session 11.

Discuss the date and location for Session 11, which is **a four-hour extended time with God.**

Here are important considerations:

- A church is usually the best location. You will need to have sufficient space to give each person privacy with minimal distractions. Each person having a Sunday school room often works out in the Christian education wing of a church.
- You may plan to have beverages and light finger-food available—maybe things like carrot and celery sticks. After this work session your group might like to eat out someplace. Do what meets the needs of most of the people in your group. They may want to leave as soon as you have completed this session.
- Look ahead at the suggestions for leading Session 11. You might share some of the key organizational details with your group at this point in Session 7.

8. Read the “Assignment for Session 8” (page 77).

Have someone read the assignment for Session 8.

9. Close in prayer.

Continue to focus on people from your *Evangelism Prayer Lists* and any upcoming activities. Your group has embarked on the whole area of witnessing. A possible prayer theme might be asking God's help in testimony preparation.

Suggestions have been made regarding possible prayer topics from week to week. This does not mean you should ignore the needs of individuals within the group, or the things for which they want to praise God. Encourage spontaneous prayer which reflects the desires, aspirations, and feelings of those taking part.

Reminders:

- You are about two-thirds of the way through Book 2. You and your group may need to plan something social or fun to do together. Think about planning at least some minimal social contact with some of your group members over the next few weeks.
- Have you ordered the materials for Book 3? Do it now so you can ensure their arrival on time.

Session 8

Book 2

GOALS FOR SESSION 8

- To have all group members well on their way to completing their written personal salvation testimony.
- To communicate appreciation and commendation for the work the group has accomplished on their testimonies.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Read the “Assignment for Session 9” (page 80).

Have the assignment read aloud when you have everyone’s attention and they are looking at page 80 where the assignment is printed. Mention that, during this Session 8 workshop, not everyone will have their “My Story” ready to put on a 3” x 5” card, but most will.

Some stories are harder to pull together than others. If some people need more time to complete their “My Story” it does not imply a lack of spirituality or intelligence—it simply means their story is more complex.

For Session 9 everyone will bring a 3 x 5 card outline for their “My Story.” (They should also bring their written draft on paper or on a digital screen.)

You may need to do some critiquing this next week by phone or e-mail. Plan your schedule so you can give some of this kind of help to those who want it—before Session 9.

3. Break into verse review groups and quote the verses on “Witnessing,”

Matthew 4:19 and Romans 1:16 (recommended but optional).

4. Participate in the workshop for sharpening “My Story.”

The purpose of the workshop is to have your group members meet and do nothing but work aggressively and intensely on their personal testimonies. This will enable each person to complete a great amount in a short time. It will lift spirits and enable people to see the end within their grasp. Sometimes, working on the personal testimony is the most difficult and most discouraging part of Book 2.

Occasionally two workshops are needed to help people complete their “My Story” and put the outline on a 3 x 5 card. Between these workshops people can make the changes suggested by the group leader.

Suggested Set-up and Format for a Workshop

1. In a reasonably large room set it up so there are several tables like a “study hall.” Those in your group will sit three or four at each eight-foot table.
2. Point out the location of the coffee pot (beverages and snack food), restrooms, scratch paper, and 3 x 5 cards. Handle any other administrative details.
3. It is best for you to do your critiquing work in a separate room near the larger room. Then you locate yourself at the end of a table in a separate room with 4 or 5 chairs along one side and other end of the table.
Explain that anyone may come into the critiquing room whenever he or she has a draft ready to read to you. Having a few waiting at your table allows them to listen to your comments to others. Some will come to your table and after hearing a few comments to others will go back to their table and adjust their document.
After people have been critiqued, they go back to the “study hall” room and work on their next draft, using your suggestions.

Husband and- Wife Leader Team

If both the husband and wife are qualified leaders, each may wish to take half of the class — men with men and women with women. When both the husband and wife work on testimonies, it greatly speeds up the process.

Number of Testimony Drafts

Emphasize that writing several drafts of a testimony does not indicate a lack of intelligence or spirituality, but rather depends on how complex the individual stories are. The second draft may be enough for some, while others will need to write three or four. Convey this point clearly so that those who complete their work quickly are not “proud of it,” and those who must work longer are not discouraged.

Follow One Vein

Each person needs to select and follow one specific course or theme in writing out his or her “My Story.”

Discourage them from starting over on a different track after the second or third draft. This would result in frustration and delay. In the future, your group members may well benefit by developing other versions of their testimony along different veins. But, for now, each one should pursue a specific direction until he or she completes the work.

Leader Attitudes

As the leader, you need to demonstrate the right attitudes, and follow proven procedures for leading this segment of the course.

Remember:

1. People are emotionally attached to their stories. They are not able to be highly objective about their past experience, and when you correct their testimonies they feel you are “tampering with their innermost life.” Be kind. Be understanding.
2. Move rapidly through this work, but do not create a rushed atmosphere. Be calm, relaxed, and alert. In order to help each person as much as possible, concentrate intensely on what each person reads to you.
3. Praise everything you can in their work. Be optimistic and confident about each person’s ability to complete their “My Story.” But do not settle for substandard work. Help them make their story great!
4. Don’t be overly serious, because quite frequently the students will need to laugh. They need some type of release because they are being introspective. Be ready to mix in some fun and humor.

Critiquing Procedures

1. Look for changes that will provide the greatest improvement in the least amount of time.
2. Organize your critique around the three sections—Before, How, and After. Does each testimony clearly include all three sections? Is any section missing?
3. Select the part (Before, How, or After) which is closest to completion and make suggestions which will help to finish that part.
4. Study the guidelines on page 60 of the student book and keep alert for any violations.
5. Take notes rapidly as you listen to each testimony. You can use these general markings by each summary phrase you jot down:
 - + good
 - not good
 - ✓ something on which you want to comment
 - ? a question you have

You can use a slash (/) to mark the flow of the story. This eliminates the need for punctuation and separates ideas. For example:

Born in Houston/ 3 brothers, 1 sister/ ✓ tell more about older brother/ father: engr./ +invented oil drill bit/ +mother: swim coach/ +could swim when I was 4/ – hated math/ oldest so worked hard/ +parents knew God personally/ ? dreamed about future/

It takes practice to become proficient at simultaneously listening and taking rapid notes. Taking notes each time you listen to a draft is important! After you have listened to 4 or 5 people your mind has trouble recalling the details of the draft just read.

6. Commend each person for everything you can. As you begin your comments after they have read their draft, share all the +’s in your notes first, before you make suggestions for improvement.

7. After hearing the first draft, emphasize only the necessary general improvements. Don’t overload him/her with suggestions and criticisms.

8. When complimenting, say **you** —”You’ve done a fantastic job on the Before. It’s full of human interest.” But when making suggestions for improvement, say **we**: “Perhaps in the How we can go back and include the gospel in more detail.”

Thoroughly review these eight procedures periodically. You need to have them firmly fixed in your mind.

5. Close in prayer.

Have someone pray briefly, pray yourself, or have two or three others pray.

Session 9

Book 2

GOALS FOR SESSION 9

- To complete personal testimony preparation.
- To help the group understand the concept of Christ’s lordship.
- To help each one evaluate the degree of submission to Christ’s lordship in his or her own life.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

They quote all the verses they have learned up to this point in Book 2. Encourage your people to get as many memory verses signed off as they can next week.

3. Hear some tell their “My Story” from a 3 x 5 card outline.

Have those who are ready tell their “My Story” from their card outline. Leave time for working on any testimonies that are not yet outlined on a 3 by 5 card.

Have someone time each testimony and give the speaker a signal at the three-minute mark. This gives him or her time to finish in less than four minutes.

If a testimony does go over four minutes, suggest that the speaker adjust the content so he or she can give it in under 4 minutes at the next meeting. Don’t become so engrossed in the time, however, that you aren’t listening to the content of each testimony. Let the timekeeper keep the time.

The other time boundary is that their “My Story” is not less than 2 ½ minutes.

Reminder:

Group members have only Sessions 10 and 11 for getting *My Completion Record* all signed off. Check on the progress of each individual.

4. Discuss the Lead-in and Close to “My Story” (pages 81-82).

As you know, the people in your group have already studied this material. You may want to go around the circle and have each person take one of the numbered suggestions and briefly describe the idea in his or her own words. This can be done quite rapidly, but it is an effective way to review and underscore each of the principles under “Lead In” and “Close.”

5. Discuss My Heart Christ’s Home (pages 91-92).

Have several people assist in reading aloud the paragraphs and verses under “Discuss My Heart—Christ’s Home (page 91). (Don’t get into a discussion of the various rooms yet.) Usually people are quite impressed with the verses and God seems to give them more enlightenment concerning lordship. They see it is not necessarily one giant step, but a lifetime of continually giving Christ control of their lives.

After page 91 has been read and briefly discussed, have each person turn to the actual text of My Heart Christ’s Home (page 83). They will have read and marked this article. Briefly discuss highlights and their general impressions one page at a time. (Remind them that in a few minutes you will be discussing each of the rooms in more detail. You don’t want to get into the specifics of each room at this point). It is much easier and more efficient to discuss the highlights of an article a page at a time than it is to discuss the whole article at once. Say something like, “On page 83, what did you

mark or what impressed you as you studied this article?” When the group is through discussing one page, go on to the next page. They will usually share something they have marked, but discussion should not be limited to what they have marked. Suggest that they write in the margin of the text some of the best thoughts gleaned during the discussion. Don’t try to squeeze the last drop of discussion out of each page. After several have made meaningful comments, move on to the next page.

After briefly discussing the text of My Heart Christ’s Home, continue on page 91. First, have the group define “The Library” by sharing various thoughts that different individuals wrote on the blank lines under “The Library.” Go through each of the rooms and “Transferring the Title” in this manner. Remind the students to write down additional thoughts under each section during the discussion. These may be ideas, insights, or Scripture references. Below you will find some of the answers that groups have come up with for each of the rooms. It is good to stop the discussion on each room when interest is high. Don’t drag out the discussion to the point of diminishing returns.

The Study (Library)

The mind. What we think about. What we read and see. Think about Scripture and Christ. Think on helpful, pure and good things. Philippians 4:8. Luke 6:45, Proverbs 23:7. Control room. Volitional thoughts. What we imagine.

The Dining Room

Our appetites and desires. Positive aspects: food, sex, sleep, exercise, correction ambition. Negative aspects: lazy, lustful, self-promoting, indulgent, selfish, materialistic and proud. Seek what God wants, not what we want.

The Living Room

Meditation and thinking time. Enjoy God for who He is. Intake of the Bible. Do not rush. Get aside from the busy world. Our quiet time or devotional life — “the withdrawing room.” God appreciates and desires it. He is always there. Time in the Word and prayer.

The Workroom

Our talents, abilities, gifts and skills. We need to be good stewards — God would like to use them. God wants our availability more than our ability. God wants to use them under His control—use them to the fullest. What is your life producing? For what is your life counting?

The Rec Room (Recreation Room)

Friendships, activities, recreation and entertainment. The use of free or spare time. We should not be wasting our time. Laughter and music are a part of our relationship to the Lord. Don’t leave God out of these times.

The Bedroom

God “forbids adultery and premarital sex not because sex is bad but because it is good.” There is far more to love than sex. It is only for those joined in a covenant of marriage. God forgives failures in this area, but He desires better things for us. Hebrews 13:4. Matthew 5:27-28 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 7

The Hall Closet

Hidden, clinging sins. Private or secret sins. This is an area on which Christ focuses attention, and He wants it adjusted and corrected now. Indulgence. Authorize Him to open it and clean it out. Personal areas that others don't know about. Job 17:9. Psalm 66:18. Psalm 32:5. Psalm 51:2.

Transferring the Title

Give Christ the authorization to completely take us over and help us to be what we ought to be and want to be. It is a decision. Complete surrender. Complete control. This is the last step. Allow Christ to take over the administrative responsibility — the maintenance.

After you have discussed pages 91-92, thank the students for their excellent ideas and for making the discussion practical and helpful. You may want to conclude by saying something like: “In our discussion, we have talked about how lordship takes place to a greater degree over a period of days, weeks, months, and even years. This does not mean that from time to time we will not have to make a decision at a ‘fork in the road.’ We may be confronted with very critical and difficult lordship decisions at certain points along the way.

“Submitting to Christ’s lordship can mean blessing, peace, and fruitfulness to the obedient Christian.”

6. Read the “Assignment for Session 10” (page 92).

Remind your group that it will be valuable for them to carefully read and mark “Suggestions for Your Extended Time with God” (pages 93-105). In two weeks we will all be having a wonderful extended time with God—in Session 11.

7. Close in prayer.

Pray about the concepts discovered in My Heart Christ’s Home and the issues they raise. Also pray for non-Christian friends, family, and acquaintances at work or in the neighborhood.

Session 10

Book 2

GOALS FOR SESSION 10

- To help the group anticipate the benefits of spending an extended time alone with God.
- To give practical suggestions for getting the most from this time with God.

1. Open the session in prayer.

Pray yourself—or ask for someone to volunteer to pray—or ask someone by name to pray. Usually keep this brief.

2. Break into verse review groups.

They quote all the verses learned up to this point in Book 2. They still have another week to complete things they still need to have signed off on *My Completion Record*. Let them that you are happy to help them in any way that you can.

3. Share quite time thoughts from *My Reading Highlights*.

Remind everyone they may want to take their *My Reading Highlights* with them for the extended time with God in Session 11. They can review what they have written down over the last several weeks, and look for recurring themes or trends.

4. Take the opportunity to tell “My Story” from a 3 x 5 card outline.

This is the last opportunity for people to tell their “My Story” in a class session. Do all you can to help people complete this assignment and have it signed on their *My Completion Record*.

5. Briefly share results from using your Prayer Sheets.

This is not a specific time to check up on them. It is more a time of sharing together the benefits and lessons learned while using the *Prayer Sheets*. You might say something like, “What are some of the benefits you have noticed or some lessons you have learned while using the *Prayer Sheets*?” This discussion will not take long, but it is both helpful and motivational to those in your group.

6. Confirm the time and place for Session 11, your extended time with God.

In deciding the time and place for Session 11 you should consider the following:

- Most groups choose to meet on a Saturday morning, a Saturday afternoon, or a Sunday afternoon.
- Your group needs to be fresh and alert. Don’t schedule it at a time when they will be worn out, or feel rushed. Keep in mind whether they are

morning, afternoon, or night people. Some compromise may be necessary.

- You need to have sufficient space and privacy to ensure minimal distraction and disruption. Consider a church or a large home, and how you will handle children, pets, and phone calls. Anticipate these types of problems, and all will benefit. **The Christian education area in a church is usually the best location.**
- Some groups like to have coffee and other beverages available during this time. If the group wants beverages, someone needs to be responsible to bring them and set them up. Some groups have chosen to have a potluck meal after the extended time with God. Some groups have had healthy snacks along with beverages. Others have wanted to get home to their children or other responsibilities right after this meeting.

The main priority is to have a time and a place to spend the extended time with God. The logistical decisions should not dominate, but the options (like food and drinks) need to be considered and decisions made.

7. Discuss: “Suggestions for Your Extended Time with God” (pages 93-105).

a. How to Spend a Day in Prayer (pages 94-101).

Have someone read the text at the bottom of page 93. Then ask what observations they want to share from the quotations on page 94.

After this brief discussion ask them to turn to page 102. It is a place where they can take notes during the discussion of this article. They can keep a finger on page 102 while everyone turns back to page 94.

Ask them what highlights they marked on page 94. Then do the same with page 95, and on through page 101. This is the same way you led the discussion on *My Heart Christ’s Home*—they share what they have marked as important or helpful.

Some people will pray about setting goals based on #2 on page 95 and #4 on page 96. You might mention to them four major goal-setting areas they might consider.

- Personal
- Family
- Ministry
- Job

They can jot down these four points in the margin of their book if they like.

They may want to use points #1 through #4 (pages 95-96) during their extended time with God. Point #5 may not be as applicable as 1-4 at this time.

b. Ways to Stay Awake and Alert (page 102).

Ask which of these did they mark as they were reading and marking.

c. Making a Worry List (pages 102-103).

Many people have found this approach extremely helpful and continue to practice this on a monthly basis. The material is self-explanatory.

d. Discuss “Checklist for Your Extended Time with God” (103-104).

Ask them which things on the checklist they think they will take to Session 11. At least half of your group will want to share their choices.

You may receive some feedback on your suggestion to bring a bag lunch and beverage. Someone might say something about fasting and prayer going together. But because this is less than four hours, going without food could be a much greater distraction than having a good meal.

Depending on the time of the year, as the leader you will need to keep in mind that the location for the Extended Time with God should not be too hot or too cold.

e. Sample of Note-Taking During an Extended Time with God (pages 104-105).

Give some brief instructions on what these examples mean. You might say something like,

“During your Extended Time with God you will find it very helpful to take notes in order to keep track of what you do during your time with the Lord. This gives you a record of things He is speaking about to you. It also helps you to keep a clear mind—you don’t have to file everything away in your memory to have to recall later. After you make some notes, you can review them and pick up trends of how the Lord is dealing with you during this particular extended time.

“Some people like to keep track of the actual time, as you see in the example on pages 104 and 105. You may wish to record the Scripture passages you read. You can see how the person recorded the highlights of what he or she read in John 14-16. Not everyone likes to be as detailed as this, but it is still important to keep some kind of written record or digital file.

“How each of you divides up the four hours will vary greatly. Some of you will want to spend a large portion of the time in reading and meditating on The Scriptures. Others will want to spend most of the time in prayer.

“Some of you will feel you have personal needs, decisions, or other items to which you want to give yourself. These might be in the area of planning, or other things which you feel you need to pray over. It might have to do with setting up objectives or analyzing your ministry situation.

“Others of you will feel that your life is pretty well up-to-date, but you feel you have neglected intercession for other people. So you might spend almost the whole time in intercession for others. You can see that if you have an extended time with God every month or two you will eventually end up with a good balance in what you have

covered in your time with the Lord. So do not hesitate to put a strong emphasis on one area—even if other areas are neglected.”

Do List

Spending an extended time in prayer almost always makes you think of other things you need to do or things you have forgotten. By keeping a sheet of paper ready to list these things, we can keep our minds free from distractions. Then we can really give ourselves to concentrating on our time with God. You can see on page 105 a segment of the do list that this person wrote during their extended time with God.

Often it is the little things which need to go on the list. So often it is not the big things in life which defeat us or hinder us, but an accumulation of many little things. The do list will be a very helpful part of your Extended Time with God.

Conclusions

Toward the end of the Extended Time with God you want to spend 15 or 20 minutes writing down conclusions—or summary things. These are the major impressions you had during your Extended Time with God. You can see on page 105 that this individual was impressed with the importance of consistency in quiet time and Scripture memory review. The balanced Christian life was also a key impression.

Conclusions are not do-list items.

The do-list items are specific things a person is going to do. The conclusion items are more overall impressions that a person feels the Holy Spirit was making during the time. An individual might come up with his or her conclusions by going back through the notes they wrote down during the day. By reviewing their notes people can see any repeated impressions or recurring thoughts.

You want to keep these notes in a notebook or in a digital file so you can review them—perhaps every week for a month. This helps you follow through on the things with which God impressed you during your extended time. Doing this periodically brings about change and progress in your spiritual life!”

It is important for the leader to have experienced everything that is discussed in the group. As soon as possible you should try out these things, if you have not already done so.

8. Read the Assignment for Session 11 (page 105).

Have someone read the assignment for Session 11.

9. Close in prayer.

Pray for protection against “the enemy” who will seek to hinder attendance at the Extended Time with God through sickness, baby-sitting problems, and a number of other distractions. Have several pray.

Continue to focus on people and activities related to the non-believers on your *Evangelism Prayer List*.

Session 11

Book 2

GOAL FOR SESSION 11

- To experience an Extended Time with God.

Preparation

You want to go to the Extended Time with God as well prepared as the people in your group. Plan to spend your time with God in the same activities they will be doing. You should approach this session not so much as the leader, but as one of the participants.

The most common location for this extended time of prayer is the Christian education wing of a church. This usually provides enough rooms so that each person can be alone. Arrange for the facility well in advance. It is often best to meet in a church the people do not attend. Familiar surroundings can be a distraction. Visual things can trigger daydreaming about people and past events. Have a clear understanding with the pastor (or other leader) about which rooms are available for your use.

Arrive early and get organized before the others come. Since all of you will meet together initially, you need to have selected a large enough room. You will also come back together in this room at the end of the session.

Walk through the facility—even if you walked through it several weeks ago when you got permission to use it. Note which rooms are available. You may need to do some minor straightening up. Locate enough individual rooms so that you and each of your students will have a room or an area where everyone can be alone. There are often more possibilities than just the rooms. Other satisfactory areas are wide hallways, outside patio or lawn areas (in nice weather), choir lofts, a corner of a gym, or a narthex. Just be sure you have permission to use such areas.

You might list the room numbers of the available rooms on a white board before the students arrive. Don't assign rooms. It takes too long and is unnecessary. Ask if they have any questions.

The following format is the way an Extended Time with God is usually organized. You may choose to plan it in some other way.

1. Meet together for a brief orientation (10 minutes).

After everyone has arrived and you are ready to begin you may hand out a printed schedule of how the time is planned. It could be projected on a wall or screen.

You might say something like: "We have this brief orientation, and then you will have over three hours to spend alone with the Lord. We will then meet back here so we

can share how we used our time, some of the things we learned, and our reactions to an Extended Time with God. This will be an exciting time, and we want to start just as soon as we can so you can spend most of your time alone with the Lord.”

In the orientation, tell them where the restrooms are, and how to regulate the heat or air conditioning. There may also be some rooms which should not be used. Any necessary logistical announcements should be handled at this time.

Follow your planned outline for the time. If you need to change the schedule, change it in favor of a shorter sharing time at the end. The minimum sharing time should be twenty minutes. The maximum sharing time should be forty minutes. The full schedule is usually from 1 to 5 p.m. on a Saturday or Sunday—or any four-hour equivalent.

Lead in a brief prayer for the Lord’s guidance. If your time for meeting is 1-5 p.m., you will all meet back together promptly at 4:30. Tell them they may wish to start writing their conclusions somewhere around 4:15 so that they will be ready to stop at 4:30 and come back together.

2. Scatter and spend individual time alone with God (3 hours and 20 minutes).

It is often helpful for the leader to remain in the room where the students will be returning at the end of your time. If both men and women are involved in the Extended Time with God, make sure the women get the most comfortable rooms.

3. Come back together again to share (30 minutes).

When everybody returns, they will be excited and have a wonderful attitude and spirit. You will be as thrilled as they are just to see how God has worked in their lives during these hours. Find out how they used their time with the Lord, and have them share their impressions.

You might begin by telling them very briefly how you spent your time. You might say something like: “After praying Psalm 139:23-24, I used the first five minutes for confession. I spent about thirty minutes reading Colossians. Then I prayed over some of the teachings in Colossians. Next, I spent thirty minutes planning how to use my time better. Then I spent fifteen minutes praying for others.” And so on. You might end the overview of what you did by sharing one major impression. For example, you might share how much Colossians 4:12 meant to you regarding wholeheartedness and fervency in prayer.

Open the discussion to those who want to briefly share what they did, enjoyed, or learned. Others may share an overview of what they emphasized in their time. Communicate that just because different people had a different blend of activities during the Extended Time with God does not mean that some were right and some were wrong. There will be differences in the ways people spend their time with the Lord.

The excitement of your discussion will increase as you go along. Encourage each person to share something about his or her time with the Lord. Keep careful track of who has shared and who hasn't. From time to time you might say something like: "Now who else has not shared yet? We would like very much to hear how your afternoon went." People may share more than once. They may share several times after everyone has shared once. Draw out the quiet ones.

Be sure to end promptly. The only exception would be if your group starts ten or fifteen minutes late. Then at the beginning of the meeting you should ask their permission to go ten or fifteen minutes longer at the end because you are starting late. If you go ten or fifteen minutes late and someone has to leave early, let him or her share first. Thank everyone for a good day and rejoice together in the Lord's goodness in meeting with you. Lead in a brief closing prayer.

You may wish to enlist two or three people to help you put things back the way you found them. Make certain the doors are locked, the heating and ventilation taken care of, and the chairs and tables put back in their right places.

This Extended Time with God can be a life-changing experience for many members of your group. If you give yourself to this session, there will be great rewards in the lives of your people.

Reminders:

- You have now completed Book 2. Evaluate the status of people in your group. Are their *My Completion Records* all signed off? Are they ready to go into Book 3? Have you set a time and place to begin Book 3?
- Some people may not have all of their Book 2 work completed. You or individuals in your group may need to give them some help.
- Be sure materials are on hand for Book 3.

Congratulations for leading your group to this point! More rewards await both you and your group as you get into Book 3, "Bearing Fruit in God's Family."