

Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church Yakima

10 Week AHA Community Groups | Fall 2020

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

Thursday Sept 17: 10 Week AHA Introduction and Training for Leaders

- Summary video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/wDFMPtueem8>

Bill Williamson 10 Week AHA series Sunday Preaching schedule

- **September**
 - 27: Chapter 1
- **October**
 - 4: Chapter 2
 - 11: Chapter 3
 - 18: Chapter 4
 - 25: Chapters 5 and 6
- **November**
 - 1: Chapter 7
 - 8: Chapter 8
 - 15: Chapters 9 and 10
 - 22: Chapters 11 and 12
 - 29: (Thanksgiving weekend) Chapter 13

Disclaimer: This document contains LOTS of information and suggestions. LOTS! Do not feel the need to read all of this, or incorporate all of this, or any of this, in the role you have as leader of your AHA Community group. Use what you find helpful ... the rest ...

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10 week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed.

- AHA Community Group Leader's Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020

Study questions for each chapter can be found at the back of the AHA Book (beginning on page 211). Those questions are also included here, with additional questions added.

The goal of the time community group members have together is not to complete the list of questions ... it is growth in each participant's understanding of who God is and God's specific love for each of us. The result, we pray, will be an increase in our love for God (Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength) and a growing love for ourselves and for others. Community groups are THE place we believe God will use to provide care and support for each individual participant.

Week 1: Chapter 1

Introduction and Chapter 1 “The Distant Country” (pages 11-26):

- Spend time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted (Even before you get to the chapter questions you may find you are half-way through the allotted group time)
 - Have each person share three things about themselves (at least one that no one (or most) in the group would know)
 - What is the farthest from Yakima you’ve ever traveled ... where, why, how, when, and what?
 - IF you could be a character in any movie you’ve seen who would it be, why would it be that character in that movie? What would you enjoy doing as that character?
 - What is your hope for the time this group spends together?
- Talk about expectations and common agreements (read the suggested list of common group agreements).
 - Are there any you would like to adopt for your group?
 - Any variations from the list? And new ideas and/or agreements?
 - Write down what your group agrees to.
 - Set the time, the place and the length of meeting time.
 - Discuss county guidelines:
 - Limit of 5 individuals, or five family units (if additional members suggest some join by Zoom). Discuss option of meeting at the church once indoor Sunday services resume.
 - Keep safe distances
 - Wear Masks
 - Food permitted when offered as individual servings (no shared bowls, cups ...)
 - Have each share how COVID-19 has, or has not, changed their life / lifestyle?
 - What do you miss most?
 - What is the greatest challenge for you, and for those you love and care about, related to this pandemic.
 - It will be helpful not to let discussions lead into politics ... especially with the highly charged, and often polarizing, election season we are in the midst of. While politics are important, the goal of these community groups is to focus on who God is and how that affects each of us in our day to day lives. If and when the topic of politics is raised it should be with gentleness and respect, creating a safe environment for all who are there. No campaigning ... please! (Maybe include in your common group understandings?)

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Son) found in Luke 15:11-32). As a group it would be helpful to read all three “lost” parables in chapter 15: 1) Lost Sheep (verses 1-7), 2) Lost Coin (verses 8-10) and then the Lost Sons (verses 11-32).

1. How familiar are you with these parables? What strikes you about these parables?
 - What are the common themes running through each of the three parables?

Read through the parable of the lost sons out loud together. Read it a second time out loud slowly. Have each read it silently a third time.

Questions from the back of the book (page 211)

1. Have you been to a distant country, or are you there now? If you are, or if you have been, what led you there?
2. What is your view of God? What are five to ten words you would use to describe how you honestly feel about Him?
3. When was the last time you simply said, “God, I need your help?”

Additional questions from Grace of Christ leaders:

- What are the dangers, limitations, and positive aspects, with Self-Help plans?
 - What self-help books or plans have you bought, read, subscribed to, tried?
- Do you think some view God, “try” Christian faith, as a self-help plan? (explain your answer). What are some possible outcomes of approaching God, Christianity, that way?
- Does the Bible have anything to say about the “Self-Help” approach to life and life’s problems? Explain your answer.
- Which of the real-life stories that the author shares in chapter 1 is most impactful and meaningful to you? Why?

Additional Thoughts and Questions from the official AHA Leader’s Guide

- Leader’s Guide can be purchased @: [Amazon Link to Leader's Guide](#)
- ❖ How hopeful are you about your hopes for this group? That is, how much expectation do you have that your hopes will be realized?
- ❖ Open your time together with a moment of silence to allow each person time to gather their thoughts, and if helpful, write some of your thoughts down.
- ❖ 3. In regard to the concept of AHA, which of the following is closest to your initial feeling?
 - I know some who need an AHA in their lives
 - I’m glad I’ve had my AHA in the past, so I’m done with that
 - I’m probably due for an AHA, but I’m not sure I really want one
 - I’m probably due for an AHA and look forward to the new life and freedom it will bring
- ❖ How would you respond to someone who said, “I’m tired of being somebody’s daughter, wife, mother. I want a life. I want to be free”?

- ❖ When it comes to the tempting voices in your daily life, do you find yourself answering in a similar way to what you just described or are your responses different, stronger, weaker, more decisive, less decisive?
- ❖ When people talk about leaving God is that the same as leaving the church? Leaving your family? Leaving your marriage?
- ❖ If God is loving and kind, why would someone choose to leave?
- ❖ The author suggests that things always fall apart when one leaves the Father (God) for the far country. Have you found this to be true in the lives of those you know? In your own life?
- ❖ How open are you to having an AHA experience? (scale of 1 to 10, 1 = not at all, 10 = absolutely)
- ❖ How safe is this group for those who want to share their AHA experience, even if messy and raw?

Appendix A

Community Groups @ Grace of Christ | Fall 2020

Handout from September 17 Introductory Meeting for Leaders

From Bill

We are planning on groups starting the 27th, and concluding November 29, which is Thanksgiving Weekend. The groups may want to meet the following Sunday to conclude, and maybe encourage them to meet one more time for reflections. Of course, the leaders can do the chapters however they want. Sermons won't necessarily line up with the chapters.

Book Cost: \$7.00

September

- 17 Introduction and Training for Leaders
- 27 Chapter 1

October

- 4 Chapter 2
- 11 Chapter 3
- 18 Chapter 4
- 25 Chapters 5 and 6

November

- 1 Chapter 7
- 8 Chapter 8
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- 29 (Thanks giving weekend) Chapter 13

When facilitating your community group

Consider beginning your discussion time together with subgroups (2 or 3)

- This makes it easier for everyone to be involved
- It gets the head and heart in motion for the larger group discussion that will follow

When asking questions

- Start with those that are less emotionally/spiritually revealing/threatening
 - Move from casual to informational to personal
- Remind the group that no one has to talk, but that when you do speak, speak honestly
- Remind and reinforce that this is a “safe” place to be honest

Think through the evening discussion material

- Goal is not to get through all questions
- Goal is honesty, trust, safety, and growth in understanding, faith, and relationships

- Highlight the evening discussion items that are the priority (the priority will differ from group to group)
- Think through how long you will focus on each priority before moving on to the next
- Remain flexible
- Address individuals affecting group health one on one after the group time ends (unless the behavior is so damaging it must be dealt with during the group meeting)
 - Remember you have the support of the church staff, and particularly Don Stuber and Curt McFarland
 - Remember everyone has difficulties and complications in their life. We are always and everywhere broken people, side by side with other broken people, seeking the healing and hope of Jesus.
 - Someone is dominating the group discussion time
 - Someone is critical in their comments
 - Someone is EGR: “Extra Grace Required”
 - Someone leads the discussion off track
 - Someone is consistently late for group
 - Someone rarely or never does their homework
 - Sharing for prayer time takes a lot longer than expected
 - Someone intimidates others unintentionally, others feel inadequate to share.
 - Someone is unwilling to share and open up

When the Community Group first meets

- Have others prepared to greet those who arrive
- First meeting starts 5 minutes late
- Have food available
- Have low threshold, easy access, non-threatening questions
 - In 1 – 2 minutes, tell us about yourself
 - What other groups have you been in previously? What was your experience? What were the challenges and what were the highlights?
 - What would you like to see happen in this group over our 10 weeks together?
- Explain goals of the 10-week group
- Discuss Common Group Guidelines
- Discuss details: When, Where, how long, what about children, review homework expectations
- Each group will include:
 - Caring for each other
 - Desire to grow in understanding, relationships, and faith
 - Study and discussion
 - Prayer each week ... and one dedicated 2+ hour time for prayer at least once during the 10-weeks together
 - Service in your neighborhood or in the community, as a group, at least once during the 10 weeks together

Appendix B

Community Groups Common Agreements | Fall 2020

Handout from September 17 Introductory Meeting for Leaders

It is essential for group health to establish common community agreements

(As your community group discusses the list below ... feel free to add, subtract, and edit as is helpful for your group)

- We will ask God to change our lives, grow and deepen our understanding and faith, as we commit to our community group.
- What we share in our group will remain confidential ... we will only share with others outside our group about ourselves.
- What we share in our community group will be as honest as we can be ... we do not have to share, but what we do share will be true.
- We will not record or take notes without the consent of all others in the group.
- We will respect each other, even when others in the group express opinions or beliefs that are different than ours.
- We will listen and not interrupt when others in the group are sharing
- We will allow time for everyone who would like to contribute, to speak. If the group facilitator talks to us about sharing less and letting others talk we will receive that counsel graciously and work to adjust how much we share.
- We will care for, support, encourage, and pray for those in our community group.
- We will participate as often as possible when our community group meets. If we are unable to attend we will attempt to inform others in our group.
- We will ask questions when we are unsure about something we are discussing as a group. Our group is a safe place for questions, doubts, fears, failings, unbelief, and honesty.
- We will lead with love and respect when difficulties and disagreements occur between community group members. When needed we will speak with the group facilitator about tensions asking for help and resolution.

Appendix C

10 Week AHA Series Tech Help Page | Fall 2020

If you need help setting up technology for your 10 week AHA Community group please contact me here at Grace of Christ. I will work with our media/tech team and assist you in finding an answer, or a set-up solution, for your weekly meetings. If your need is urgent we will do all we can to help, but we may not make your deadline.


Curt McFarland
Grace of Christ Presbyterian
curt@yakimagrace.com
church: 509-248-7940 x114
cell: 509-388-5156

General suggestions/reminders for using technology for your community group:

- Remember that technology does not make or break a community group. Technology can assist ... but it can also hinder.
- Have a backup plan for any given meeting.
 - Do not spend more than two or three minutes attempting to fix the problem
 - Switch to backup plan
 - If Zoom is not working (or any other video conferencing platform) have participants phone in. Most phones now have a “conferencing” feature where you can merge multiple calls onto one phone. With the iPhone push the “add” button while on the phone with someone, this will add the person who is calling into the conference call.
- If Zoom fails, if the phones fail, if the electricity fails ... God remains faithful and relationships remain rich and certain.

Zoom Video Conferencing

- Zoom is the common video conferencing platform (program) we use here at Grace of Christ to facilitate meetings when face to face options are limited or restricted.
- Zoom offers a no-cost, easy to set-up, easy to use, “basic” option for groups that are not able to meet in person, or who have members who are unable to attend because of distance or due to concerns they have about health and welfare.
 - Basic membership limits your Zoom to 40 minutes if you have more than two participants. Maximum participants: 100)
 - Getting started information @ <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-Windows-and-Mac>
 - Video lessons available @ <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-video-tutorials>

- To get started
 - On your computer open your web browser (Google Chrome, Apple Safari, Microsoft Edge or Explorer ...)
 - Type in “Zoom.us” and you will be directed to the main Zoom website
 - Click on “Sign up, it’s free”
- 
- Enter birthdate
 - Enter email address and anti-machine verification (Captcha code) click “Sign in”
 - You will be sent a verification email. Open Email and verify. Create password.
 - You are ready to Zoom.
-
- Sign in to your Zoom account
 - Click on “join a meeting” if someone else is hosting (you do not need a Zoom account to join a Zoom meeting someone else is hosting). Click on the Zoom link provided by the host or enter the Meeting ID number the host has provided. Enter the passcode provided by the host. Click on “join using computer audio.” The Zoom host will admit you from the “waiting room”. You are now a part of the Zoom meeting.
 - Click on “Host a meeting” to start your own Zoom meeting. Your meeting will start. Click on “copy link” under “invite link” and paste your invite link to text or email of participants.
 - When guests join your meeting admit them from “waiting room”. On bottom center of screen click on “participants” and in box that opens allow participants to “unmute” themselves.
 - Your video and audio controls are at bottom left of your screen. Click on microphone to turn on and off your audio. Click on camera icon to turn on and off your video.
 - When you want to end meeting click on red “end meeting” button located bottom right of screen and then “end meeting for all”.

 - If the above scares you a bit ... contact us at the church and we can assist you, or we can set-up and schedule your Zoom meeting using one of our church Zoom accounts (this will require a conversation about meeting host details).

Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church Yakima

Week 2: **AHA**: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

Bill Williamson's 10 Week AHA series Sunday Preaching schedule. Bill has emphasized that the Sunday sermon may not line up with where you are in your group's study of the AHA book. Sundays will typically focus on the chapter your group has just completed.

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For additional information please refer to week 1 handout / or Email: Curt@yakimagrace.com

Week 2: Chapter 2

Chapter 2 “Coming to Your Senses” (pages 29-46):

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this time will take 5-10 minutes each time you meet.
 - If there are new people joining you (which may happen for the first three meetings) then spend time re-introducing every group member. After 3 weeks your group should no longer be open to new members. Continually welcoming new members makes developing trust and close relationships more difficult.
 - Opening questions you might consider this week:
 - If you were given an all-expense paid (no limits on spending) 3 month vacation ... where would you go, who would you take with you (*be careful if your spouse is in the group!*), what would you do, what would you hope to accomplish during your time away?
 - If you could revisit one 24-hour period in history (as an observer without altering the event itself) when would that be? Why would you choose to experience (or re-experience) that event in history?
 - What is your hope for the time this group spends together?
- Revisit the expectations and common agreements discussed and agreed to last week
 - Are there any additional questions or concerns members of the group have?
 - Re-affirm agreement to follow county guidelines, explaining why:
 - Our desire to love others by doing what we can to protect them (we may unknowingly be an asymptomatic carrier).
 - If there are any lingering questions, concerns, or suggestions, please call and talk to one of the pastors or staff program leaders (509-248-7940).

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Son) in Luke 15:11-32. Have someone, a volunteer, read the parable of the prodigal sons (verses 11-32) out loud. Then read it silently, individually, noting as you read it the words and details that impact you.

Questions from the back of the book for chapter 2 (page 211)

1. Why is so difficult for us to hear and respond to the early warning alarms God puts in our lives?
2. Can you think of a time when you ignored an alarm and faced consequences later? Looking back, what should you have done to wake up instead of pressing Snooze?
3. Is there an alarm sounding in your life right now? What step(s) do you need to take to make sure you don't ignore it?
4. Pray for God to open your eyes to the ways He is trying to get your attention.

Additional questions from Grace of Christ leaders:

- When you are at Costco, at Safeway, at Lowes, at the movies, driving down the road ... what grabs your attention?



- What is suppose to get our attention (warn us) but we no longer pay attention to it? (think of the noise and flashing of a turn signal blinker left on)
- Who, in our life, can be trusted to warn us of trouble we are in, or headed for?
- Re-read Luke 15:17 “But when he came to his senses”?
 - What brought this prodigal son to the point where he came to his senses?
 - What were the warning signs, the alarms, that he received before trouble came?
 - Why didn’t this prodigal respond to earlier warnings? Which are more effective, a hard warning or an easy warning? Explain your answer
- What examples of “alarms” do we have in the Bible where God provided clear warnings of dangers ahead, or of a problem being ignored? Some examples:
 - Genesis 4:1-10 (Cain) | Exodus 7:8-13 (Pharaoh) | 1 Samuel 12:1-15 (David)
 - Luke 22:31-34, 60-62 (Peter) | Acts 9 (Saul) | 1 Samuel 8:1-9 (Samuel and Israel)
 - How might their lives have been different if they had listened to, and heeded, the warnings sent by God?
- How have alarms sent by God saved you from a specific difficulty or trouble, or helped you break away from trouble, or a temptation/sin, you were in the middle of?
- Which of the real-life stories that the author shares in chapter 2 is most impactful and meaningful to you? Why?
- Why does God provide warnings (in the Bible, from friends and family, from society, from a conviction or medical diagnosis, from a voice inside (conscience/Holy Spirit))?
- What would it mean, what would be the result, if God did not warn us and instead let us do whatever we wanted to do?

Additional Thoughts and Questions from the official AHA Leader’s Guide for chapter 2

- Leader’s Guide can be purchased @: [Amazon Link to Leader's Guide](#)
- ❖ Group Leaders: Be prepared to share one of your past AHAs as a model for the group
- ❖ Suggested wording for opening your group time, and also for an opening prayer (modified from the Leader’s Guide)
 - Proverbs 4:23 says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” But as Jeremiah said, “The heart is deceitful ... who can understand it?” (17:9). The Pharisees of Jesus’ day, for example, seem unaware of their hearts. That is why Jesus called them “whitewashed tombs.” They looked good on the outside, but inside their hearts were “full of dead men’s bones,” that is, greed, self-indulgence, and hypocrisy. Jesus called them to clean the inside, then the outside would be clean (Matthew 23).

We may be able to fool others into thinking everything is fine in our life; no problems, no struggles. Social media feeds this. It is harder to fool ourselves ... although many of us are good at this. If we want the change and freedom in our life that is offered by God we have to pay attention to the honest condition of our heart (our life).



Since this study is first of all about “Awakening,” we are going to begin each of our times together with a moment or two asking God to help us be aware, to face, those things within us that we often try to hide (Psalm 139:23-24). This is difficult but essential.

PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR GROUP ... VERY IMPORTANT! *If, over the course of these ten weeks, you discover, uncover, aspects of your life, your past, your present, that are so intense and painful that you cannot share them in this group, or they are causing you significant distress, please seek additional help; speak privately to your group leader who can refer you to one of the pastors at the church. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not on our own. We need to care for each other. We are here to help each other discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*

As we prepare to reflect on our life it may help us to close our eyes in order to block out external distractions so that we can focus on our hearts.

Are we aware of our heart? Who we are? How are we feeling? Are we peaceful? Are we sad? Are we angry? Tired? Energized? Bitter? [Pause]

What is weighing on our mind? Have we been thinking about some problem from our day? Some broken relationship? Have we been judging others, silently criticizing those we work with, live with? Have we been looking for ways to bless someone we know who is facing a difficult time? Are we worried about how this group will go? What are we thinking? Wake up to the thoughts coursing through our mind. [Pause]

Are we aware of God’s presence in this world, in our life, and right here during this time we have together? In Matthew 18:20, Jesus said, “Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” So let’s take a moment to wake up to Jesus, to welcome him. [Pause]

Prayer: Jesus, we thank You for Your promised presence, for knowing each one of us by name, for loving us at all times. These are amazing, incredible truths that come directly from You. Help us to understand and believe. You came into this world, a world You created, to save us, to heal us, to love us, to free us. Teach us again through this story You told in this parable of the lost sons so long ago. Amen.

- ❖ AHA (Sudden Awakening | Brutal Honesty | Immediate Action)
- ❖ Take a moment and reflect on any AHA moments you have had. Write them down if you find that helpful.
- ❖ Invite others to share an AHA moment in their life. *This is where you can share one of your AHA moments as an example for the group.*

- An AHA moment from one of your Grace of Christ pastors. *Very difficult and complicated relationship with my mom and sister. I loved them but felt I needed to keep a distance, not wanting to get drawn into unhealthy aspects of their lives. I had a sudden AHA when I heard God speak and remind me of the importance of re-connecting ... while still protecting my wife and kids. I did begin to re-connect, with compassion (not always perfectly offered). While difficult, it has been freeing for me and God honoring.*
- ❖ The image in this chapter of an alarm sounding was a repeated theme. What is your tendency when your wake up alarm sounds? Do you jump up right away? Do you hit the snooze button a few times? Do you get up before it goes off?
- ❖ How do you respond to “wake-up” alarms that sound off in other areas of your life?
- ❖ Is there someone in your life who you hope will wake up to the alarms sounding in their life? If so, can you share about that (without mentioning specific names)
- ❖ Draw the following box which represents four basic ways we can respond when we notice something wrong in another person’s life:

	Compassion	Condemnation
Honest		
Dishonest		

- ❖ We can be honest and compassion (combining truth with humility and love) or honest and condemning (truthful but harsh and judgmental).
- ❖ We can be dishonest and compassionate (ignoring truth, pretending, not wanting to hurt feelings) or dishonest and condemning (disinterested, uncaring and mean, hoping to hurt the other).
 - Can you give an example when you have been approached by someone who is honest but condemning? How did that feel? How did that relationship work out?
 - Can you give an example when you have approached someone in one of the above four ways ... how did that work out for them and for you?
- ❖ Is this group safe for those who want to share their AHA experiences, even if messy and raw? How can we as a group become that safe place?
- ❖ The writer of the AHA book correctly suggests that we need the power of God’s Holy Spirit to wake up. Let’s ask for God’s help as we close our time together with prayer.

Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church Yakima

Week 3: October 11

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

Introductory Page

Bill Williamson has indicated that his 10-Week AHA sermon series will typically, but not always, focus on the chapter in the AHA book your group has just completed.

Disclaimer: This leader's guide contains LOTS of information and suggestions. LOTS! Do not feel the need to read all of this, or incorporate all of this, or any of this. Use what you find helpful.

Beginning with this third edition of the AHA Community Group Leader's Guide we will highlight particular questions we feel may be worth prioritizing for your group discussion. As always, the choice is yours. What works best for one group may not work for another.

Highlighted questions will be marked "**QFC:** Question for Consideration" (*not Quality Food Center*)

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Leader's Guide Week 3: Chapter 3 AHA "A Desperate Moment" (pages 47-64)

Part 1 (Gathering):

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this time will take 5-10 minutes each time you meet.
 - If there are new people joining you (week 3 would be the last week new members can join) then spend time re-introducing every group member.

Part 2 (Opening):

- Pray (suggestion offered on page 5)
- Getting to know you questions you might consider:
 - If you could have thought up and patented one existing invention, what would it be and why?
 - If you were gifted 50% ownership of any professional sports team which team would it be and what changes would you make in the first year?
- What is your hope for the time this group spends together?
- Is this group safe for those who want to share their AHA experiences, even if messy and raw? What can we do to become a safe place for honest sharing?
- Are there any final changes to the group's common agreements?

Part 3 (Read the Bible Passage):

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32. As a group, read the parable out loud. Then read it again silently, individually.

Part 4 (Group Questions):

- I. Questions from the back of the AHA book
- II. Questions from Grace of Christ leaders
- III. Questions from the official AHA Leader's Guide

I. Questions from the back of the AHA book (page 212)

- Have you ever hit rock bottom? What happened?
- **QFC** *How have you responded to difficult circumstances in your life? Have they driven you away from God or drawn you to God? Or, both?*
- Complete this sentence, "I stopped running from God when ..."



II. *Questions from Grace of Christ leaders*

- **QFC** *Describe a time when you suddenly realized you were lost, your life was out of control, you felt powerless.*
 - How did it feel?
 - How did you respond?
 - Who did you turn to for help?
 - What was the outcome?
- What was the young son in the parable expecting when he moved to the distant country?
 - Read once more Luke 15:14-16 “And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.”
- How was his real life experience different from his expectations?
 - What caused him to reach his “desperate moment?”
- **QFC** *Does everyone who travels to the distant country reach a “desperate moment?”*
 - All of How would your life be different if you faced no consequences for the choices you made?
 - If others also faced no consequences for their actions what would life and society look like?
 - If that really were a possibility would we be more or less likely to turn to God?
 - Are we thankful, or annoyed, by the warnings God sends, and the consequences we face?
- The author writes about two main ways we reach a desperate moment in our life:
 - Difficult circumstances
 - Deserved consequences
 - Do you agree?
 - If yes, please offer some examples of both (from the prodigal parable, and from life itself)?
 - Difficult circumstances (A severe famine arose in that country)
 - Deserved consequences (He spent everything and began to be in need)
- **QFC** *If you had the ability to go back and remove the difficult and painful experiences in the lives of those you love, would you?*
 - Spend a minute in silence reflecting on this before discussing it.



- What would your life be like if all the difficulties and heartaches you've experienced were removed from your life?
 - How have difficulties you've experienced changed and shaped your life?
 - See pages 51-53 in AHA for a crucial and thought-provoking discussion on this.
- **QFC** *Do you agree with the author that it is not sermons, books, or even small groups that contribute the most to a person's spiritual growth ... it is difficult circumstances (page 53).*
 - Difficult circumstances are not a guarantee for spiritual growth and AWAKENING. Sometimes, when the difficult circumstances come, we reject the opportunity to wake up, or we blame and attack God rather than turn to Him ...
 - In his book *"The Problem of Pain"* C.S. Lewis writes, "We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world ... No doubt pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument; it may lead to final and unrepented rebellion. But it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment. it removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of the rebel soul."
- Does what the author of AHA, and what Lewis, wrote about pain ring true? Explain?
- Read **Romans 5:1-5**. How does this relate to the discussion about facing difficult times?
- **John 16:33** Jesus said, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world."
 - Jesus certainly could have commanded an immediate end to all difficulty and pain ... He did not ... why not?
- How have you responded when reaching "rock bottom" or coming close to it?
 - When a person responds with anger toward God upon reaching Rock Bottom, is that the worst response they could have?
 - Consider **Psalms 22:1** "Why have You forsaken me?" Psalmist ... and from the Cross.
 - Consider **Psalms 42:9** "Why have You forgotten me?"
 - Those expressing anger or questioning God seem fully accepted by God. They are still engaging God. Indifference and apathy toward God may be the worst response.
- **QFC** *Does God cause, or does God use, pain in our life?*
 - See discussion on page 56-57
 - God is not the author of evil ... **James 1:17** "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change"



- (Side note: one of the most helpful and exceptional books on pain in our life is the book mentioned, Gerald Sitzler's book "A Grace Disguised").
- **Romans 8:28-32** "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"
- What does it take to get your attention?

III. Questions from the official AHA Leader's Guide

- Suggested opening your group time, and also for an opening prayer (modified from the Leader's Guide)
 - Ephesians 5:14 says, "Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Wake up again to Jesus' presence ... His kindness ... His interest in you. In your moods and your thoughts. Wake up to His company. Notice what difference His presence in the world and in your life makes.
 - Wake up to others in your group. Each of those around you have their own struggles and pressures, sorrows and joys. In your heart and mind, ask Jesus to help you pay close attention to, and care about, each individual.
 - Prayer: Jesus, thank You for Your presence in us and among us by the miracle, gift, and power of the Holy Spirit. Please open our eyes, our ears, our hearts, our pocketbooks so that we would really see those we meet and then respond with compassion and love. Help us to be awake, honest, and ready to take action. Speak to us as we seek You. Get our attention when we lose our way. Change us as we follow You. It is by Your grace we are saved. It is through Your mercy we have hope and a future. We pray in Your name Jesus, Amen.
- Why is the "Distant Country" so alluring?
- **QFC** *What are some of the costs associated with traveling to, and living in, the distant country?*
- 2 Chronicles 36:15 speaks of God sending messengers to warn His people persistently. What does this passage say is the reason God sent so many warnings?

- “The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.”
 - Is this your experience as you are being tempted to travel to the distant country?
- How loud does the alarm need to be to get your attention?
- As you get older, do you find yourself responding to alarms more quickly or more slowly?
- Two categories of Awakening suggested by the author
 - Painful recognition, in which an individual comes face to face with the destruction he or she has caused
 - Startling realization, in which a person’s eyes are opened to an insight that changes how he sees himself, life, or God.
- What do you think of this distinction? Does it match your experience?
- Awakening can be quickly derailed by denial. Three forms of denial are suggested by the author:
 - Simple denial, in which one simply ignores the problem
 - Minimization, in which one plays down the problem
 - Projection, in which one projects the problem and the blame onto someone else
- Do you find one of these forms of denial more common in your life than the others?
- Take some time to imagine what might happen if you ignore the alarm you’ve been hearing. Write down what might be the worst-case scenario, the best-case scenario, and the most likely scenario, if you continue to ignore the alarm.
- Then imagine what might happen if you respond to the alarm. Write down what might be the worst, the best, the most likely, scenarios if you paid attention to the alarm.
- What did you find helpful, if anything, in this exercise?

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about this Leader’s Study Guide, please call Curt McFarland (509-248-7940 x114), or Email: Curt@yakimagrace.com

Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church Yakima

Week 4: October 18. AHA Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

Introductory Page

We are continually refining this leader's guide based on feedback received. With this edition, week 4, we will provide a **Focus Section**, highlighting what we believe will be most helpful for your AHA community group (last week's QFCs), and a **Supplemental Section** with additional information you may find useful as you prepare. As always, the choice is yours. What works best for one group may not work for another.

Bill Williamson has indicated that his 10-Week AHA sermon series will typically, but not always, follow the chapter in the AHA book your group has just completed. ***This week's Sunday Mission speaker is a departure from our AHA series.*** Please accept the challenge to identify and invest in a local mission, as a group, during these 10 weeks. Suggestions for mission groups to invest in are included in the supplemental section.

Disclaimer: Do not feel the need to read all of this Leader's Guide, or incorporate all included here. Use what you find helpful.

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10-week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed.

- AHA Community Group Leader's Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020

The goal of the time community group members have together is not to complete the list of questions ... it is growth in each participant's understanding of who God is and God's specific love for each of us. The result, we pray, will be an increase in our love for God (Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength) and a growing love for ourselves and for others. Community groups are THE place we believe God will use to provide care and support for each individual participant.

It is Important that each group member knows that *if, over the course of these ten weeks, they discover, uncover, an aspect of their life, their past, their present, that is so intense and painful they cannot share it with the group, or they are experiencing significant distress as they work through AHA, they can speak privately with you their group leader. You can provide support, and also refer them to one of the pastors. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not on our own. We need others to help us discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*

Leader's Guide Week 4: Chapter 4 AHA "A Startling Realization" (pages 65-77)

Focus Section

First (Gathering):

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.
 - In order to help develop trust among group members (to allow honest sharing) there should be no additional people joining your group. If someone expresses a desire to join your group please help them connect with the church office. We will invite them to join the Sunday after service AHA open group.

Second (Opening):

- Prayer
- Getting to know you questions you might consider:
 - When in grade school ... what games did you play during recess/lunch? Any particular memories of those times?
 - Share an experience you've had swimming/wading/surfing/standing at or in the Ocean.
- Ask, "are we a safe place for honest sharing?"

Third (Read the Bible Passage):

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32. Read the parable out loud.

Fourth (Group Questions):

1. Read Luke 15:17 once more "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death."

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on this verse. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to this verse.
 - Why was this a startling realization for the young prodigal? (*for leaders: how was this a different understanding from how he perceived his father when he asked for his share of his father's estate and left for the distant country?*)
 - Why did it take so long for him to come to this realization? (*for leaders: we are making assumptions here, but we reasonable assumptions ... what may have been his excuses, rationalizations, attempts to solve the crisis he was in by himself before he came to this startling realization*)
 - What were the circumstances that made it easier for him to see his father in a new way? (*for leaders: All of the time he had alone feeding the pigs. It may have become increasingly difficult to avoid refection and honesty*)



2. How much silence and solitude do you have in your day to day life? Why is it difficult to find times for silence and solitude? Would more silence in your life be helpful? If yes, how can we include more silence in our day?

3. We do not come to life changing, soul searching, God honoring, realizations on our own. The author (page 66) speaks of the Holy Spirit opening up our eyes. Christian faith claims the Holy Spirit is a gift given by God to those who realize their need for the love, forgiveness, and mercy of Jesus. The Holy Spirit even generously works in the lives of those far from God (we were all once far from God: lost sheep, lost coin, lost sons). What do you understand about the Holy Spirit? *(This question could take up your entire group time. That's OK).*

- What are some common understandings/misunderstandings about the Holy Spirit?
- What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit? (Leaders: *read several of the suggested verses below in whatever way works best for our group (it may help to include verses before and after those listed) and then discuss how they help us understand the person, work, and role, of the Holy Spirit. Leaders may want to print off the final page of this leader's guide where the following Bible passages are reprinted and provide a copy to each group member).*)
 - **Genesis 1:2** "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters"
 - **Psalms 51:11** "... take not your Holy Spirit from me"
 - **Psalms 139:7** "Where shall I go from your Spirit?"
 - **Micah 3:8** "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might"
 - **Luke 1:35** "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God"
 - **Luke 11:33** "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"
 - **Luke 24: 31-32** "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?""
 - **John 7:39** "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified"
 - **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you"
 - **John 16:13** "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come"



- **Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”
- **Acts 2:38** “And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”
- **Acts 8:29** “And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot”
- **Acts 16:14** “One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.”
- **Galatians 5:22** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness”
- How is the Holy Spirit a part of your day to day life?

4. “Lord, open our eyes that we may see.” What Startling Realizations about your life, about your faith, about the relationships you have in your life, about your life priorities, about the character of God and His plans for your life, have you come to (over the years) by the generous, loving work of the holy Spirit?

Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapter 4 (page 212)

- Have you had a moment of realization when you suddenly saw what had been right in front of you for a long time? (pages 65-66)
- Do you have someone in your life who has your permission to “flip the switch” to tell you that last 5 percent of truth? (pages 71-71)

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

- When the author shared the story of the couple who suddenly realized they were “fans” of Jesus instead of “followers” (page 66) what did that mean to them?
 - How would you describe the difference between: “fans” and “followers”?
 - Is it more common to find “fans” or “followers” in church? Explain.
 - If we are being totally honest ... which are we most of the time? In what ways are we sometimes (or always) a “fan” and sometimes a “follower”?
- Have you ever been like the father on page 67, praying for something, not realizing God has been answering your prayer all along?
 - What were your thoughts as you read about the father’s prayers for his daughter and God’s response, “Well, which one do you want? You have prayed for her entire life to be an awesome witness, and now she is.”
- Can you identify with any of the following statements mentioned on page 68? Explain.
 - Not actually following Jesus, just following rules and rituals
 - Using food to try to satisfy your soul by filling your stomach
 - Looking for someone else to provide what only God can provide
 - Stressed about money because you are trusting money rather than God
 - Wrestling with guilt and shame because you want to be good enough to earn God’s favor rather than resting in His freely offered grace
- Read 1 Kings 19:1-13. After a great spiritual victory (chapter 18) the prophet Elijah was on the run, afraid, hiding in a cave. He was filled with self-pity. He wanted to hear from God. (pages 69-71)
 - What were the ways he thought he would hear from God? What was the way God actually spoke to him?
- Share a time when being alone, being silent, brought you to a startling realization.
 - Where and when did this happen?
 - Why do you think it happen there and not in the midst of your busy life?
- Read 2 Kings 5:1-19, the story of Naaman. (AHA pages 72-75)
 - What was Naaman’s crisis?
 - How did God speak truth to this foreign army commander?



- What did it take for Naaman to hear the truth and come to the startling realization he needed to humble himself in order to be healed?
- What was Naaman's response to the healing he experienced?
 - How did his understanding of God change? (His Startling Realization)
- Who in your life can 'flip the switch' for you? Who is able to tell you the last 5% of truth you need to hear? (page 75-76)

There are no Extra Questions from the official AHA Leader's Guide for chapter 4

Suggestions for Mission/Service Involvement as a Group

Your safety and health are priorities for us.

Please select a mission/service option that protects you, your group, others

- **Adams Elementary School** (Contact Alex Rule: 248-7940 x113)
 - Deliver books to school age kids one Thursday evening, or one Thursday evening for the next few months. You would be joined by a member of the Adams Elementary / Grace of Christ team (Spanish speaking). You would receive books bundled for a particular student. Drive to their home and hand deliver.
- **Union Gospel Mission** (go to: <https://www.yugm.org/volunteer>)
 - Variety of ways to volunteer directly with Union Gospel Mission clients, or behind the scenes, on premise or from a distance.
- **Madison House** (See information at: <https://www.yugm.org/madisonhouse>)
 - Numerous support and volunteer opportunities in person or from a distance
- **Grace of Christ Preschool** (call the church office: 248-7940)
- **Ghormley Meadow Christian Camp** (<https://www.campghormley.com/get-involved/non-summer-volunteer-opportunities/>)
- **Provide care packets, make phone calls, offer prayer for Church members unable to attend church** (Contact Curt: 248-7940 x114)
- **Provide yard clean-up, house cleaning, for a church member in need** (Contact Curt: 248-7940 x114)
- **Camp Hope (Shelter for Homeless)** (go to: <https://www.camphopeyakima.com/for-new-volunteers>)
- **Adopt a school** and write encouraging notes for staff, provide coffee cards, donuts ...
- **Stop by Police or Fire Station** and write encouraging notes for staff, provide coffee cards, donuts ...

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about this Leader's Study Guide, please call Curt McFarland (509-248-7940 x114), or Email: Curt@yakimagrace.com



Bible passages related to the person, work, and role of the Holy Spirit

We do not come to life changing, soul searching, God honoring, realizations on our own. The author (page 66) speaks of the Holy Spirit opening up our eyes.

What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit?

- **Genesis 1:2** "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters"
- **Psalms 51:11** "... take not your Holy Spirit from me"
- **Psalms 139:7** "Where shall I go from your Spirit?"
- **Micah 3:8** "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might"
- **Luke 1:35** "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God"
- **Luke 11:13** "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"
- **Luke 24: 31-32** "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And Jesus vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?'"
- **John 7:39** "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified"
- **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you"
- **John 16:13** "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come"
- **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"
- **Acts 2:38** "And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"
- **Acts 8:29** "And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot"
- **Acts 16:14** "One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul."
- **Galatians 5:22** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness"

Grace of Christ Presbyterian Church Yakima

Week 5: October 25. AHA Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10-week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed.

- AHA Community Group Leader's Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020

What's included in this week's Leader Guide

Below you will find a **Focus Section** (highlighting what we believe will be most helpful for your AHA community group), and a **Supplemental Section** (with additional information that may assist you as you prepare). As always, the choice is yours. What works best for one group may not work for another.

Bill Williamson has indicated that his 10-Week AHA sermon series will typically, but not always, follow the chapter in the AHA book your group has just completed. The October 25 Sunday sermon focuses on week 4: "A Startling Realization" in our AHA series.

Disclaimer: Do not feel the need to read, or incorporate, all that is in this Leader's Guide. Use what you find helpful.

The goal of the time community group members have together is not to complete the list of questions ... it is growth in each participant's understanding of, and encounter with, the One Living God revealed in Jesus. The result, we pray, will be an increase in our love for God (Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength) and a growing love for ourselves and for others. We believe that community groups are THE best place God will use to provide the care and support we all need.

It is Important that each group member knows that if, *over the course of these ten weeks, they discover, uncover, an aspect of their life, their past, their present, that is so intense and painful they cannot share it with the group, or they are experiencing significant distress as they work through AHA, they can speak privately with you their group leader. You, as their leader, can offer support, and also refer them to one of the pastors. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not on our own. We need others to help us discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*

Leader's Guide Week 5: Chapter 5 "Brutal Honesty: Talking to Yourself" and Chapter 6 "Denial – If I Ignore It, Maybe It Will Go Away" (pages 81-111)

Focus Section

First (Gathering)

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.
 - From this point forward, please refer all who desire to join your group to the church office. We will invite them to join the Sunday after service AHA open group.

Second (Opening)

- Prayer
- Getting to know you question you might consider:
 - What was the most interesting job you had before you turned 30? Share one memory from that job.
- Ask, "Is there a way we can be an even safer place for honest sharing?"

Third (Read the Bible Passage)

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32. Read the parable out loud.

Re-read Luke 15:20-21 ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on these verses. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to these verses.

Each week invite member of your community group to share questions or comments they found helpful in the AHA chapter(s) for the week.

Fourth (Group Questions)

1. Invite group members to share their understanding of what took place between the younger prodigal and his father in verses 20-21. Is there anything included in their understanding that is not clearly mentioned in the verses? If yes, are the differences reasonable to infer from the passage? Discuss.
 - How might the two different groups hearing this parable (the tax collectors and sinners, and the Pharisees and Scribes/Legalists and Experts in Religious Law) have reacted to this part of the story?



2. The author contends that lasting change in our life will not take place without a commitment to brutal honesty. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = totally ignoring truth about yourself and 10 = completely honest and sharing your faults with everyone you meet) how honest are you with yourself?

- What is your normal response when you are faced with an unpleasant truth about your life?
 - The illustration of the blacklight in the hotel room revealing all the stains (pages 97-99) ... Would you turn the black light off and turn the regular lights on and continue on as if there were no stains? Would you keep the black light on and try and avoid the worst spots? Would you say, “It’s no big deal, the world is a dirty place”? Would you ask the hotel management to deep clean the room, request another room, go to another hotel and pretend it is cleaner, or would you go home?

3. How easy is it for someone to hide their sins from others? How likely is it that a hidden sin will remain secret? Is it easier to continue living a lie (hiding a sin) or telling the truth?

Discuss.

- Read Hebrews 4:12-13 “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account”
 - What does this passage say about the secrets we are able to keep hidden from others?
 - If every intimate detail, past sin, and compromising thought, in our life were displayed publicly for all to see, how would we respond? Does being a follower of Jesus change our response?

4. Should we confess our sins to someone else as the author contends (pages 94-96)?

- What is the value of confessing our sins to someone else?
- At the heart of the Prodigal Sons parable is a public confession, “Father I have sinned ...”
- Matthew 5:21-26 “... So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you. Leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift ...”
- Confronted with his sin King David wrote Psalm 51 “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.”
- Confession to God is essential (1 John 1:8-10), is confession to another person also essential (James 5:16)?

5. The author suggests the kind of person we should seek out when we need to confess our sins to another (page 94)



- A Christian who shares your convictions
- Someone who will be honest themselves
- Someone who is trustworthy
- Someone who has freely received the grace of Jesus and freely gives it.

To this list I would add what I believe to be of absolute importance ...

- “Someone who you know cares for you and loves you deeply”
 - Is this important? Why or why not?

6. When we confess our sins, is it necessary/helpful to share every detail of our sin? How much do we need to share? How much did the prodigal share in his confession (was what he confessed affected by what his father already knew about his sins)?

- Who in your life will you seek out when you need to confess a sin in your life? What about them makes you feel they are a safe person for you to confess your sins?
- How will you respond when a friend comes to you and wants to honestly confess their sins?

Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapters 5 & 6 (page 213-214)

Chapter 5

- When you look into the spiritual mirror, what do you see that no one else does? What has kept you from bringing it into the light?
- When you think about confession, what comes to mind?
- Do you have someone in your life who asks you the hard questions and to whom you confess sin? What would it take for you to develop that kind of relationship?
- What would change in your life if you were willing to regularly do the hard, uncomfortable work of confession?

Chapter 6

- What happens to us when we live in denial?
- When we are faced with uncomfortable truth, what are the emotions we experience that leads us to denial? How can we confront them rather than give in to them?
- Read John 8:31-36. How does this relate to denial and confession?

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

When a sin in your life is exposed do you respond with regret or repentance (page 86)? What is the difference between the two?

- How does regret and repentance relate to apology and confession?
 - Read and compare the response of King Saul and King David when each was confronted with their sin
 - 1 Samuel 13:8-14 the prophet Samuel confronts King Saul (apology)
 - 2 Samuel 12:1-15 the prophet Nathan confronts King David (confession)
- When was the last time someone confronted you about an aspect of your life that needed correction?
 - Did you examine your life honestly to see if there was any truth in what was being said?
 - If there was truth in what was being said did you respond with regret at being caught or repentance, wanting a genuine change in your actions and behavior?

Extra Questions and Insights from the official AHA Leader's Guide for chapters 45 & 6

Opening Statements and Prayer

AHA is not a once-for-all phenomenon. Rather, it is an ongoing practice, a way of life. It's advantageous to develop a practice of recurrent Awakening, persistent Honesty, and consistent Action. So let's again begin by setting aside a few minutes for prayerful attentiveness. Once more, you might close or avert your eyes so as to lessen outside distraction.



First, notice the weather pattern inside you just now, the internal climate conditions. How would you describe the state of your soul? Is your inner being bright and sunny? Overcast with a threat of rain? Windy and Storming? What do you notice? (Pause)

As you consider the state of your soul, are you being honest about the weather pattern you find there, or are you avoiding or denying what you encounter? Are you being honest or dishonest? (Pause)

Also, as you notice your internal climate, are you giving yourself gentle compassion toward what you discover there, or are you judging what you find? Are you in the compassion zone or the condemnation zone? (Pause)

In Luke 8 we read of someone asleep. On this occasion the person napping was Jesus, fast asleep on the fishing boat. When a storm blew in, His disciples roused Jesus up, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" Jesus woke up, calmed the storm, and asked the men, "Where is your faith?" In the story, Jesus was the one who was physically asleep, but it was His followers who had yet to wake up to whom was right beside them.

Wake up again to Jesus' presence, right here, right now. As you do, invite Him into the weather conditions in your soul. Notice what happens as you do. (Pause)

See if you can maintain this sense of wakefulness to yourself and to Jesus during the rest of the gathering.

Father, we're told that while Jesus was on earth He was fully human, so He had to sleep like we do. But according to Psalm 121, You "neither slumber nor sleep." We praise You for always being awake to what we need. Please provide what we require during this time together. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Questions

1. The author emphasized that sooner or later things go bad in the far country. Someone might respond, "But does staying with the Father mean things won't go bad? Can't things go just as bad, or even worse, even when one is faithful. After all, consider all the bad things that happened to the prophets, to the apostle Paul, and to Jesus Himself!" How would you respond to such an observation? *(The following in italics is added by Grace of Christ leaders: Leaders it is important to acknowledge that our faith in Jesus does not exempt us from hard times ... Christian faith claims we have a resource (God's Holy Spirit) who will provide us strength, see us through each and every circumstance we face, and take what is painful, dark, and difficult and turn it towards something that brings light and life)*

- *Joseph sold by his brothers, a slave in Egypt, falsely accused and thrown in jail (Genesis 37-50)*



- *David chosen by God to be king. He spends years on the run, hunted by the current king Saul (1 Samuel 19-30)*
- *The prophet Jeremiah thrown into a pit and left to die because he obeyed God and spoke God's message to the people (Jeremiah 38)*
- *Paul the apostle is so utterly crushed by his attackers he believes he is going to die (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)*
- *The early Christian community (1 Thessalonians 1:1-6, Romans 5:1-5 ...)*

2. Look up and read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11. Based on this passage, how would you describe the difference between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow?

3. Have you ever learned something about yourself (by looking in the mirror or by a passing comment from someone else) and it significantly altered how you viewed yourself, so much so that you could never "unlearn it"?

4. It was suggested that we look in the mirror and be as honest as we can with ourselves. In a general sense, what is it like for you to look at yourself in the mirror? What feelings arise? Are you OK looking at yourself or do you have some aversion to it?

5. It was suggested that when we are in sin, honesty is saying, "I have sinned, period," without qualifications. How might that teaching relate to a passage like Romans 7:14-25? Read those verses and discuss.

6. This week's teaching was primarily about self-honesty. For many people, being honest about something sinful and feeling contempt for the wrong done and the person who did it is one and the same. They don't separate honesty from condemnation: the two go hand in hand. Does a person have to dole out condemnation when being honest about something negative? Are the two things one? What do you think?

7. Also, for many people, compassion is wedded to dishonesty: that is, when they are being "nice" and "kind," that means they must overlook what is wrong. For such a person, to be compassionate is to pretend the bad things aren't so bad or didn't really happen. Does compassion necessitate being soft on truth?

8. How did Jesus operate when faced with the sin in people's life? (*Grace of Christ leaders added the following: Read Luke 7:36-50. Did Jesus ignore the sins of this woman?*)

Suggested exercise

Stand in front of a full-length mirror and simply look at yourself. Avoid changing anything about yourself as you look. Starting at your feet, or the lowest part visible in the mirror, direct your gaze gradually upward until you reach the top of your head. Just notice what you see. Pay

attention to your reaction to what you see. *(Grace of Christ leaders add: Read Psalm 139:1-18 and also Isaiah 53:1-3 (a prophesy about Jesus). How does God view us? What makes us us?)*

Still standing in front of the mirror, look into your eyes and speak the truth about who you are in God's eyes. Also speak the truth about what you need to confess to God.

Suggestions for Mission/Service Involvement as a Group

Your safety and health are priorities for us.

Please select a mission/service option that protects you, your group, others

- **Adams Elementary School** (Contact Alex Rule: 248-7940 x113)
 - Deliver books to school age kids one Thursday evening, or one Thursday evening for the next few months. You would be joined by a member of the Adams Elementary / Grace of Christ team (Spanish speaking). You would receive books bundled for a particular student. Drive to their home and hand deliver.
- **Union Gospel Mission** (go to: <https://www.yugm.org/volunteer>)
 - Variety of ways to volunteer directly with Union Gospel Mission clients, or behind the scenes, on premise or from a distance.
- **Madison House** (See information at: <https://www.yugm.org/madisonhouse>)
 - Numerous support and volunteer opportunities in person or from a distance
- **Grace of Christ Preschool** (call the church office: 248-7940)
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- **Adopt a school** and write encouraging notes for staff, provide coffee cards, donuts ...
- **Stop by Police of Fire Station** and write encouraging notes for staff, provide coffee cards, donuts ...

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about this Leader's Study Guide, please call Curt McFarland (509-248-7940 x114), or Email: Curt@yakimagrace.com

Grace of Christ AHA Community Group Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

For the week of November 1, 2020

Week 6 of our 10-week series | Chapter 7 in AHA Book

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10-week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed.

- AHA Community Group Leader's Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020

What's included in this Leader Guide

Below you will find a **Focus Section** (highlighting what we believe will be most helpful for your AHA community group), and a **Supplemental Section** (with additional information that may assist you as you prepare). As always, the choice is yours. What works best for one group may not work for another.

Bill Williamson has indicated that his 10-Week AHA sermon series will typically, but not always, follow the chapter in the AHA book your group has just completed. The November 1 Sunday sermon will focus on Luke 15:20-21, "The Father's Embrace."

Disclaimer: Do not feel the need to read, or incorporate, all that is in this Leader's Guide. Use what you find helpful.

The goal of the time community group members have together is not to complete the list of questions ... it is growth in each participant's understanding of, and encounter with, the One Living God revealed in Jesus. The result, we pray, will be an increase in our love for God (Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength) and a growing love for ourselves and for others. We believe that community groups are THE best place God will use to provide the care and support we all need.

It is Important that each group member knows that if, *over the course of these ten weeks, they discover, uncover, an aspect of their life, their past, their present, that is so intense and painful they cannot share it with the group, or they are experiencing significant distress as they work through AHA, they can speak privately with you their group leader. You, as their leader, can offer support, and also refer them to one of the pastors. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not on our own. We need others to help us discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*



Leader's Guide Week 6: chapter 7 "Projection – It's Not My Fault, So It's Not My Responsibility" (pages 113 - 124)

Focus Section

First (Gathering)

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.
 - From this point forward, please refer all who desire to join your group to the church office. We will invite them to join the Sunday after service AHA open group.

Second (Opening)

- Prayer
- Getting to know you question you might consider:
 - Have you ever been pulled over by a policeman for some vehicle infraction (speeding, going too slow, license tabs expired, running a stop sign or stoplight, texting while driving, no seatbelt ...)? If yes, was your first inclination to own up and confess you were wrong, or did you start thinking of, and giving, some excuse? If you've never been pulled over ... you are either amazingly fortunate ... or you don't drive! In either case ... did you ever get caught doing something you shouldn't have been doing in school? Did you admit your responsibility, or did you look for a loophole, a way out, someone else to blame?

Third (Read the Bible Passage)

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32. Read the parable out loud. (*Some groups now skip this step and move directly to the focus verses and the questions.*)

Fourth (Group Questions)

Each week invite members of your AHA Community Group to share what was most meaningful to them, or raised questions for them, in this week's chapter of the AHA book.

1. Re-read Luke 15:22-24 ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on these verses. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to this verse.
- Was the father's response in verses above what you would have expected? What were the possible responses the prodigal son could have received when he returned home?
- How did the father's response differ from the son's expectation?



- How would the father's response affect you if you were the prodigal returning home? Discuss your answers.
2. How did the father's response demonstrate forgiveness to his son? Discuss.
3. If you were asked to explain "forgiveness" what would you say?
- How easy is it for you to ask for forgiveness?
 - What do you say to someone when you know you have hurt them by what you've done or said?
 - How easy is it for you to extend forgiveness to someone who has hurt you deeply?
 - Does forgiving someone mean you forget what they've done?
4. Does Christian faith have a different understanding of forgiveness than other religions and philosophies? Discuss.
- What does the Bible teach about forgiveness? (Some suggested passages listed below)
 - **Matthew 18:15-29** (Is it a coincidence that this is just after Matthew's telling of the "Parable of the Lost Sheep?")
 - **Colossians 2:13** "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses."
 - **Colossians 3:13** "bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."
 - **1 John 1:8-9** "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"
 - **Psalms 103:8-14** "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. ¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. ¹⁴ For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust."
 - **Psalms 51:1-2** "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!"
 - How many times should we forgive someone who repeatedly hurts or offends us? Read the following and discuss:
 - **Matthew 18:22** "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"



- **Luke 17:3-5** “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, “I repent,” you must forgive him.’ ⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’”
- Recite the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Does praying the Lord’s Prayer change how we offer and receive forgiveness?
 - **Matthew 6:14-15** “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”
 - **Matthew 18:34-35** “And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

5. Timothy Keller (retired pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan) claims that forgiveness always costs something of the person offering forgiveness (Read excerpt below). Do you agree? Does the Bible confirm or refute Keller’s position on forgiveness? If he’s right, what did it cost for the prodigal to be forgiven? What did it cost God to forgive you?

Excerpt from SERVING EACH OTHER THROUGH FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION
Dr. Timothy Keller

“When speaking of forgiveness, Jesus uses the image of debts to describe the nature of sins (Matt. 6:12; 18:21– 35). When someone seriously wrongs you, there is an absolutely unavoidable sense that the wrongdoer owes you. The wrong has incurred an obligation, a liability, a debt. Anyone who has been wronged feels a compulsion to make the other person pay down that debt. We do that by hurting them, yelling at them, making them feel bad in some way, or just waiting and watching and hoping that something bad happens to them. Only after we see them suffer in some commensurate way do we sense that the debt has been paid and the sense of obligation is gone. This sense of debt/liability and obligation is impossible to escape. Anyone who denies it exists has simply not been wronged or sinned against in any serious way.

What then is forgiveness? Forgiveness means giving up the right to seek repayment from the one who harmed you. But it must be recognized that forgiveness is a form of voluntary suffering. What does that mean?

Think about how monetary debts work. If a friend breaks my lamp, and if the lamp costs fifty dollars to re- place, then the act of lamp-breaking incurs a debt of fifty dollars. If I let him pay for and replace the lamp, I get my lamp back and he’s out fifty dollars. But if I forgive him for what he did, the debt does not somehow vanish into thin air. When I forgive him, I absorb the cost and payment for the lamp: either I will pay the fifty dollars to replace it or I will lose the lighting in that room. To forgive is to cancel a debt by paying it or absorbing it yourself. Someone always pays every debt.

This is the case in all situations of wrongdoing, even when no money is involved. When you are sinned against, you lose something—perhaps happiness, reputation, peace of mind, a relationship, or an opportunity. There are two things to do about a sin. Imagine for example that someone has hurt your reputation. You can try to restore it by paying the other person back, voicing public criticisms and ruining his or her reputation. Or you can forgive the one who wronged you, refuse payback, and absorb the damage to your reputation. (You will have to restore it over time.)

In all cases when wrong is done there is a debt, and there is no way to deal with it without suffering: either you make the perpetrator suffer for it or you forgive and suffer for it yourself.

Forgiveness is always extremely costly. It is emotionally very expensive—it takes much blood, sweat, and tears. When you forgive, you pay the debt yourself in several ways.

First, you refuse to hurt the person directly; you refuse vengeance, payback, or the infliction of pain. Instead, you are as cordial as possible. When forgiving you must beware of subtle ways to try to exact payment while assuring yourself that you aren't. Here are specific things to avoid:

- + making cutting remarks and dragging out past injuries repeatedly
- + being far more demanding and controlling with the person than you are with others, all because you feel deep down that they still owe you
- + punishing them with self-righteous “mercy” that is really a way to make them feel small and to justify yourself
- + avoiding them or being cold toward them

Second, you refuse to employ innuendo or “spin” or hint or gossip or direct slander to diminish those who have hurt you in the eyes of others. You don't run them down under the guise of warning people about them or under the guise of seeking sympathy and support and sharing your hurt.

Third, when forgiving you refuse to indulge in ill-will in your heart. That is, don't continually replay the tapes of the wrong in your imagination, in order to keep the sense of loss and hurt fresh so you can stay actively hostile toward the person and feel virtuous by contrast. Don't vilify or demonize the offender in your imagination. Rather, recognize the common sinful humanity you share with him or her. Don't root for them to fail, don't hope for their pain. Instead, pray positively for their growth.

Forgiveness, then, is granted before it is felt. It is a promise to refrain from the three things above and pray for the perpetrator as you remind yourself of God's grace to you. Though it is extremely difficult and painful (you are bearing the cost of the sin yourself!), forgiveness will deepen your character, free you to talk to and help the person, and lead to love and peace rather than bitterness.”



6. What happens to us when we refuse to forgive someone who has hurt us?

- Who do you need to forgive?
- Who do you need to ask forgiveness from?

Take time in silence, either during the group, or during this next week, and reflect on these questions. These are not intended for sharing during the group. Please find someone to share what you discover during this time of reflection. Speak to one of the pastors.)

Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapter 7 (page 214)

- Who or what do you tend to blame when you find yourself in the pigpen?
- Why is so difficult for us to accept fault - with no ifs, ands, or buts?
- Is there someone you need to admit fault to right now? Write out what you need to say to them, and watch for projection and subtle ways you try to excuse yourself. Then go to them and read what you've written.

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

- What product or day-to-day “warning” signs have you seen that are over the top, unnecessary, even ridiculous?
- The author describes denial as refusing to “admit the reality of an unpleasant fact”, and projection as “admitting that the reality exists without taking responsibility for it” (page 114)?
 - Do you agree with his definitions?
 - Provide examples of both denial and projection.
- Do you agree with the author that we have become a “blaming” society, unwilling to take responsibility for our choices and actions? Discuss. If yes, Is this something new? What examples can you think of from the Bible that support your position? What problems are caused when we blame others instead of accepting (without qualifications) responsibility?
 - If you were this prodigal who would you have been tempted to blame for your problems? (See the author’s helpful discussion on page 118 and page 122).
- Is it helpful to blame parents for the bad behaviors and decisions we have made in our life?
 - How can we honestly address the pain caused by the failures, abandonments, abuse, apathy, criticism we experienced from our moms and dads and not get stuck in the past, unable to move forward (stuck in the “pigpen of projection” page 120)?
 - What steps do we need to take to forgive our parents (even if they never ask for our forgiveness)?
- Is the author’s suggestion (on page 117) that we simply say four words, “I am a sinner” the right approach? Is that enough?
 - Would you be satisfied if someone who had hurt you deeply came to you and said, “I am a sinner?”
 - The author states (page 124), “generally speaking, the shorter the apology, the better.” Do you agree? Discuss.

- What did it mean for the father to clothe him in the best robe, put a ring on his finger, put shoes on his feet, and kill the fatted calf?
- Why do some blame God when things are hard and difficult, but fail to give Him the credit when things are going well (page 122-124)?

There are no Extra Questions from the official AHA Leader's Guide for chapter 7

We are strongly encouraging each AHA Community Group to agree on a mission they can invest in together

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Here are some suggestions for Mission/Service Involvement

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Grace of Christ AHA Community Group Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

For the week beginning November 8, 2020

Week 7 of our 10-week series | Chapter 8 in AHA Book

We are planning an end of AHA celebration event for all of our AHA community groups (prayer, singing, sharing of testimonies from the 10 week series) on Sunday evening December 6. More information coming soon!

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10-week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed: **Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020**

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Disclaimer: Do not feel the need to read, or incorporate, all that is in this Leader's Guide. Use what you find helpful.

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Leader's Guide Week 7: chapter 8 "Minimize – It's Not That Big of a Deal"

(pages 125-137)

Focus Section

First (Gathering)

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.

Second (Opening)

- Prayer
- Getting to know you questions you might consider:
 - Share an uncomfortable, unpleasant, "wish I hadn't gone through that" travel experience (plane, car, bus, boat ...)?
 - Share a time you complained about bad service in a restaurant, a store, an internet provider ... and what they told you was essentially ... "It's not that bad."

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32.

Third (Group Questions)

Each week invite members of your AHA Community Group to share what was most meaningful to them, or raised questions for them, in this week's chapter of the AHA book.

1. Re-read Luke 15:25-30 ²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!'"

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on these verses. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to this verse.
- Why do you think the older son responded with anger when he heard his "father's son" had returned from the far country?
 - The younger prodigal misunderstood his father and finally came to a startling realization that his father was quite generous. How does the older prodigal's response to his father reveal a misunderstanding of his father?
- Most see this story as the Parable of the Lost Sons (both the younger and the older sons are "lost" or "prodigal")

- The older son is often compared to a good son. One who is always following the rules, working hard, doing what is expected of him, going to church, respectable, behaving ... How can a good son (or daughter) like that be “lost” or, a “prodigal”?
- Which of the two sons do you most identify with? Share as much as you are comfortable sharing.

2. Do you agree with what the author writes on page 127. Why or why not?

“Sin will always take you farther than you want to go,
Sin will always cost you more than you want to pay,
Sin will always keep you longer than you want to stay.”

3. How would most people you know define the word “sin.” When most think of sin, do they think of it as a serious problem?

- In two or three sentences how would you define the concept of sin to someone who had never been to church?
- How serious of a problem is sin?

4. What does the Bible say about sin? (included here are some verses to consider. *These verses are also printed at the end of this guide for those who would like to print them and provide a copy to members of their AHA group*)

- **Genesis 2:17** “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
- **Genesis 6:5** “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
- **2 Samuel 12:13** “David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.”
- **Psalms 38:1-4** “O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath! ² For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me. ³ There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.”
- **Psalms 51:8-11** “Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me”
- **Ecclesiastes 8:11-13** “¹¹ Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. ¹² Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. ¹³ But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.”
- **Isaiah 30:1** “‘Ah, stubborn children,’ declares the Lord, ‘who carry out a plan, but not mine, and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin ...’”

- **Isaiah 59:2** “but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”
- **Jeremiah 16:10-12** “And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?’ ¹¹ then you shall say to them: ‘Because your fathers have forsaken me, declares the Lord, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law, ¹² and because you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, every one of you follows his stubborn, evil will, refusing to listen to me.’”
- **Romans 3:20-21** “...For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...”
- **Romans 6:16** “Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?”
- **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”
- **Ephesians 2:1** “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.”
- **Ephesians 2:12** “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”
- **1 Timothy 5:24** “The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later.”
- **Hebrews 9:22** “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”
- **James 1:14-15** “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”
- Why is our sin such a significant theme in the Bible?

5. Why did the preaching of Jesus begin with a message about sin? Why might it be necessary for us to hear the bad news of our sin before we are receptive to the good news of God’s grace and forgiveness?

- Matthew 4:17
- Mark 1:14-15
- John 1:29
- Acts 2:37-39

6. What is the real cost of our sin? (What is the impact of our sin on our: relationships, time, money, priorities, condition of our soul, connection with God)

Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapter 8 (page 214)

- How do you see minimization in your life?
- What is the connection between denial, projection, and minimization? Why do we so easily give in to these?
- What can the response of the Ninivites in Jonah 3 teach us about a proper response to conviction?
- The prodigal son realized that his decisions had caused significant relational damage that needed to be mended. Take a few minutes to honestly assess the relational consequences of your actions – even the actions that don't seem like a big deal. What can you start working on to mend those relationships?

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

- From the book (page 126) “minimization is acknowledging the reality of the situation and even owning responsibility for it but denying its seriousness.” Do you agree with this definition? Discuss.
- How have you seen sin slowly take over a person's life? (*Frog in the Kettle is comfortable as the heat is slowly increased.*)
- Are some sins worse than others? Discuss? Can a case be made from the Bible that gossiping or speaking ill of someone is as bad as actual murder? And, lusting is as bad as committing adultery?
 - Matthew 5:21-30
 - James 2:10-13
- How do many minimize the impact of sin in their life?
 - I'm just having fun
 - No one's getting hurt
 - It's not that big a deal
 - God grades on a curve ... I'm a pretty good person, definitely not as bad as so and so
 - God forgives everyone, He loves everyone, we all get into heaven ... except for the really bad people.
 - I've done a lot of nice things, donated a lot of money to good causes, attended church regularly, that makes up for my sins.
- Do some pastors and preachers, in an attempt to be inoffensive and not preach “hell and damnation”, do a disservice to their churches by not talking enough about sin? Discuss?



- Re-read page 137 in the AHA book. The author states that “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23). Do you believe we deserve death because of our sins? Discuss.

There are no Extra Questions from the official AHA Leader’s Guide for chapter 8

We are strongly encouraging each AHA Community Group to agree on a mission they can invest in together

Your safety and health are priorities for us. Please select a mission/service option that protects you, your group, others

Here are some suggestions for Mission/Service Involvement

- **Adams Elementary School** (Contact Alex Rule: 248-7940 x113)
 - Deliver books to school age kids one Thursday evening, or one Thursday evening for the next few months. You would be joined by a member of the Adams Elementary / Grace of Christ team (Spanish speaking). You would receive books bundled for a particular student. Drive to their home and hand deliver.
- **Union Gospel Mission** (go to: <https://www.yugm.org/volunteer>)
 - Variety of ways to volunteer directly with Union Gospel Mission clients, or behind the scenes, on premise or from a distance.
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- **Stop by Police or Fire Station** and write encouraging notes for staff, provide coffee cards, donuts ...

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What does the Bible say about sin? Included here are some verses to consider.

- **Genesis 2:17** “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
- **Genesis 6:5** “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
- **2 Samuel 12:13** “David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.”
- **Psalms 38:1-4** “O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath! ² For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me. ³ There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.”
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Grace of Christ AHA Community Group Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

For the week beginning November 15, 2020

Week 8 of our 10-week series | Chapters 9 & 10 in the AHA Book

We are planning an end of AHA celebration event (prayer, singing, sharing of testimonies from the 10-week series) for all of our AHA community groups (and any others too) on Sunday evening December 6 from 4-5pm at the church. More information soon.

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10-week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed: **Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020**

What's included in this Leader Guide

Below you will find a **Focus Section** (highlighting what we believe will be most helpful for your AHA community group), and a **Supplemental Section** (with additional information that may assist you as you prepare). As always, the choice is yours. What works best for one group may not work for another.

Bill Williamson has indicated that his 10-Week AHA sermon series will typically, but not always, follow the chapter in the AHA book your group has just completed.

The goal of the time community group members have together is not to complete the list of questions ... it is growth in each participant's understanding of, and encounter with, the One Living God revealed in Jesus. The result, we pray, will be an increase in our love for God (Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength) and a growing love for ourselves and for others. We believe that community groups are THE best place God will use to provide the care and support we all need.

It is Important that each group member knows that if, *over the course of these ten weeks, they discover, uncover, an aspect of their life, their past, their present, that is so intense and painful they cannot share it with the group, or they are experiencing significant distress as they work through AHA, they can speak privately with you their group leader. You, as their leader, can offer support, and also refer them to one of the pastors. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not on our own. We need others to help us discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*

Leader's Guide Week 8: Chapter 9 "Time to Get Up" (pages 141-154) & Chapter 10 "Passivity – I'm Sure Everything Will work Itself Out" (pages 155-167)

Focus Section

First (Gathering)

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.

Second (Opening)

- Prayer
- Getting to know you questions you might consider:
 - Describe a time when you set a goal that required that you invest significant time and energy. How did you feel when you accomplished your goal? Looking back ... was it worth the effort?
 - Share a time when you knew you needed to address some problem with your car (started to hear a noise, notice a leak ...) or house (yardwork, something broken ...) but kept putting it off ... what was your reason for putting it off, and what was the outcome?

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32.

Third (Group Questions)

Each week invite members of your AHA Community Group to share what was most meaningful to them, or raised questions for them, in this week's chapter of the AHA book.

1. Re-read Luke 15:31-32 ³¹ And he (the Father) said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on these verses. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to this verse.
- What does the father mean when he tells his older son, "You are always with me, and all that is mine is yours"?
- How does verse 32 fit into all three of the "lost" parables (lost sheep, lost coin, lost sons) in Luke 15?
- What is Jesus communicating in this parable about the character and plans of God?
- Discuss what you imagine happened next for the older son? For the younger son?

2. Is it more difficult for you to admit you need to make a significant change in your life, or more difficult to actually implement what you need to in order for that change to become a reality? Any examples?

- What does it usually take for you to make a change in your life (comments from others, pain you can't ignore, a sudden realization, faith convictions, a lack of other options ...)?
 - Honestly, but only with as much detail as you feel comfortable sharing, what changes have been most difficult for you in your life?
3. How would you answer someone who asked you for a 15 second response to the question, "what the goal of Christian faith?"
- *Not necessarily to be shared with your group ... a suggestion from one of the Grace leaders, "Each heart, mind and life being turned (changed) by God in the direction of God and others."*
4. What does the Bible say about the need for "change" in our life? For each of the verses below discuss how our lives would be changed if we took the verse seriously.
- **Mark 12:29-31** ²⁹ Jesus answered, 'The most important is, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." ³¹ The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these'"
 - **Psalms 51:9-13** ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God,* and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you."
 - **Ezekiel 36:26-27** "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."*
 - **Luke 3:7-8** "He (John the Baptist) said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.'"
 - **Romans 12:1-2** "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, *but be transformed by the renewal of your mind*, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (English Standard Version)
 - **Romans 12:1-2** "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. *Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold*, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God

for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.” (J.B. Philips version)

- **2 Corinthians 4:16** “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, *our inner self is being renewed day by day.*”
- **2 Corinthians 5:16-21** “From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.* The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- **Galatians 5:22-23** “²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is* love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
- **Colossians 1:27-29** “²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, *that we may present everyone mature in Christ.* ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”
- **Philippians 3:12-14** “¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*”
- **2 Peter 3:18** “¹⁸ But *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen “

5. When we talk about change it often sounds as if it depends on human strength, decision, will-power. Is that the kind of change we are talking about? How does real, eternity-lasting, God honoring, change happen in a person’s life?

- In chapter one of the AHA book (page 13) the author wrote, “if self could help, then we would have all been fixed a long time ago. So let me be clear: AHA is not a self-help process. It’s the anthesis of a self-help book ... this journey begins with a rejection of your self’s offer to help.”
 - If that’s true where does: 1) the realization we need to change, 2) the desire to change, and 3) the ability to implement that change, come from?
- **1 Corinthians 3:5-7** “⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but *only God who gives the growth.*”



- **Philippians 2:12-13** “¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*”
- **John 15:5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me *you can do nothing.*”

Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapters 9 & 10 (page 215-216)

Chapter 9

- What are the barriers between brutal honesty and immediate action? Why is it so difficult to pass through them?
- Why is there often such a difference between “public beliefs,” “private beliefs,” and “core beliefs”? How can we begin to develop consistency?
- As you’ve read through this book so far, maybe you’ve had a sudden awakening, and maybe even been brutally honest with yourself. In light of that, what action do you need to take?
- What is standing between you and that necessary action?

Chapter 10

- It seems so natural to choose the path of least resistance, but that’s not what will lead us to AHA. How does the hard work of immediate action bring changes that the path of least resistance never could?
Passivity happens when we honor something over God. We rarely, if ever, intend for that to happen, so what leads us honoring things like family, money, and comfort above God?
- What’s your “first step”? How will you act on it?

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

- The author shared about his experience Bungee jumping while on his High School Senior class trip (pages 141-143). He related his fear as he stood on the edge, and how he finally just fell forward Have you ever had an experience like that when, despite your fears, you “stepped off” and did what you thought you couldn’t do? Explain your answer. If yes, what made you able to “step off”? If no, what prevented you from “stepping off”?
- Were you surprised by the data related to patients who had undergone heart surgery (pages 146-147)?
- Discuss the difference between “public beliefs,” “private beliefs,” and “core beliefs”? (page 151)
 - Do you find there is a disconnect between some of your core beliefs and how you are living your life (how you spend your time? Your money? How you live out what you believe? How you treat others? How you handle your business transactions? How you eat and exercise? ...) Explain your answer.
- How comfortable are you with change? Do you find yourself gravitating to the same seat in church, in the classroom, at the workplace? Do you order the same food when you return to a restaurant? Do you take the same route from home to store or work? Do you have a similar routine most evenings?

- When change does come into your life do you welcome it or resist it? How does forced change make you feel?
- Who are some of the real people mentioned in the Bible who's life changed because of their relationship with God? (Joseph, Moses, Ruth, David, Naaman, Jeremiah, Peter, John, Mary Magdalene, Saul/Paul)
- Can a person who claims to be a Christian stay the same from the moment they come to understand the love of God in Jesus until the moment they die? Explain.
- When we do not act on the change we know should be happening in our lives is that an indication we have chosen someone, or something, over God? (page 162). Discuss examples of this.
 - The author writes, "It may sound a little cold, or perhaps a bit trite; however, the truth is we need to obey God even when we don't feel like it. When we obey God without the motivation to do so, our feelings will eventually catch up with our actions."
 - Have you experienced this (obey first with our actions and then our feelings will follow) in your life?

Extra Questions from the official AHA Leader's Guide for chapters 9 and 10

- In our readings of the prodigal parable, we have intentionally left out the part about the older brother. Let's turn to Luke 15:25–32 and have someone read that now.
- We can be lost in the far country, and we can be lost at home. What is your reaction to the idea that it is possible to be lost in both places?
- The author states, "This story in Luke 15 is not about the brothers. It's not really a story about the prodigal son. It's about a father who relentlessly and recklessly loves all his children." How has this series affected your view of God the Father?
- The basic instruction of this study is to go back to the Father. What would you say to the person who replies, "I've gone back to the Father a thousand times. When I get home, I just can't stay there. I just can't live up to it. I keep wandering away. Am I hopeless?"
- The story of the prodigal is not the whole story of life with God. The parable tells one part of the journey, the journey home. But it doesn't necessarily tell us how to stay home. Or does it? Does the story help us in how to stay home?
- **PRAYER:** Let's close by again trusting in the presence of Jesus who is full of grace and truth and a Father who relentlessly and recklessly loves us, and pray out of this trust. I'll begin, and I will also close when it seems everyone who desires has prayed.

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Grace of Christ AHA Community Group Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

For the week beginning November 22, 2020

Week 9 of our 10-week series | Chapters 11 & 12 in the AHA Book

*Our plans for the December 6 "End of AHA Celebration" have changed. **Due to the recent re-imposed restrictions, gathering together is no longer an option.** Please use your last AHA community Group gathering (by Zoom) to share ways God has spoken to you, revealed new insights, encouraged AHA (Awakening, Honesty, Action). Please record what is shared (*without names attached*) and pass along those stories to Curt (Curt@yakimagrace.com).*

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Each Monday evening, throughout this 10-week series, we will be offering a leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed: **Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020**

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Bill Williamson has indicated that his 10-Week AHA sermon series will typically, but not always, follow the chapter in the AHA book your group has just completed.

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It is Important that each group member knows that if, *over the course of these weeks, they discover, uncover, an aspect of their life, their past, their present, that is so intense and painful they cannot share it with the group, or they are experiencing significant distress as they work through AHA, they can speak privately with you their group leader. You, as their leader, can offer support, and also refer them to one of the pastors. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not easily on our own. We need others to help us discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*



Leader's Guide Week 9: Chapter 11 "Procrastination: I'll Get to It Later" (pages 169-181) & Chapter 12 "Defeatism – It's Too Late Now" (pages 183-196)

Focus Section

First (Gathering)

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.

Second (Opening)

- Prayer
- Getting to know you questions you might consider:
 - Are you the kind of person who: finishes your homework the day it is assigned, completes the project a week before it is due, pays your bills a month in advance, checks off your end of week chores on Monday ... or are you the kind of person who: begins work on your assigned homework a day or two (an hour or two) before it is to be turned in, is typically racing the clock to complete projects, send in payment for bills with hours or days to spare, your end of week chores get done, usually a day or five, after the week is over? How does your approach to deadlines impact the rest of your life and your relationships?
 - Share how you prepared for, packed for, planned for, got to the airport/harbor/driving destination, for your last vacation? Was the vacation restful and relaxing or did you return home as tired and worn out as when you left?

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32.

Third (Group Questions)

Each week invite members of your AHA Community Group to share what was most meaningful to them, or raised questions for them, in this week's chapter of the AHA book.

1. The Author returns this week to an earlier part of the Prodigal story Re-read Luke 15:20 "And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him."

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on these verses. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to this verse.
- Discuss what could have been the rest of the story for this son (use your imagination and how you've seen similar lives end) if he: 1) had an awakening, 2) was honest with himself, but 3) did nothing to make a change ... he did not get up and go back to his father?
- What would be the insights from this parable if it ended with the prodigal son feeding pigs in the far country, too full of pride to return home?



- If you had been the young prodigal how difficult would it have been for you to get up and go back to your father, hat in hand? Would you have done what the prodigal did? Would you have had a different plan?

2. Read the story of the life of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) and the author's insights on pages 176-180 in the AHA book.

- What are some of the excuses Zacchaeus could have used for giving up and going home instead of persevering and climbing a tree so he could see Jesus?
- Why do you think Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus?
- Zacchaeus' change seems genuine. He commits half of all he has to the poor. Is he honest with his past (consider his statement, "If I have defrauded anyone ...")? What does Jesus' response (verses 9-10) teach us about the grace and kindness of God when He accepts Zacchaeus, us, even though he, we, are still a work in progress?
- Zacchaeus made a commitment to "restore fourfold" if he had defrauded anyone. What might that have looked like the next day, the next week? How much could Zacchaeus' commitment potentially have cost him in the long run?
- What commitments have you made, how is your life different, because of your relationship with Jesus?

3. In chapter 12 of the AHA book the author shares a story about someone who feels it is too late for them. They believe they have wasted their life and there is now no hope for forgiveness, a new beginning, a relationship with God.

- Is there a point at which it is too late for someone? Is there a moment when someone has gone too far, for too long, and there is no longer any hope for them?
 - What about the worst of criminals? The worst predators? The worst terrorist? The worst and most evil throughout human history?
- If you were speaking with someone who shared their belief that: it was too late for them, past choices made their future hopeless, they were beyond the forgiveness of God, how would you respond?

4. If someone unfamiliar with Christian faith asked you to explain "God's grace" in a few sentences, what would you say?

- How did the father's response in the parable of the prodigal demonstrate grace?
- How essential is "God's grace" in Christian faith?
- What are the alternatives to accepting God's grace?

5. How does the Bible help us understand the importance of God's grace? (consider the following passages and discuss what they have to say about God's grace)

- **Deuteronomy 7:6-7** "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of



all peoples,⁸ but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

- **Psalm 86:1-8** “Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.² Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.³ Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all the day.⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.⁶ Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.⁷ In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.⁸ There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.”
- **Jeremiah 31:1-3** “At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.² Thus says the Lord: ‘The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest,³ the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.’”
- **Matthew 11:27-30** “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
- **John 1:14, 16-17** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth ...¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”
- **John 15:16** “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”
- **Acts 15:8-11** “And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us,⁹ and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.¹⁰ Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?¹¹ But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”
- **Romans 3:23-24** “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
- **Romans 6:1-2** “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich”



- **Galatians 2:20-21** “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”
- **Ephesians 2:1-5** “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved.”
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
- **2 Timothy 1:8-9** “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”
- **Titus 3:5-7** “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”
- **Hebrews 4:16** “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”
- **2 Peter 3:18** “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

6. How does a correct understanding of God’s grace change our relationship with God? With others? With ourselves?

Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapters 11 & 12 (page 216-217)

Chapter 11

- What are the areas of life where you procrastinate?
- If you look back honestly, what has procrastination cost you?
- How do you see putting off the pain, prolonging the pleasure, and/or planning it to perfection playing a role in your procrastination?
- Can you think back to some “here and now” moments (pages 179-180) you’ve experienced in the past? What led to those moments, and what changes came out of them?

Chapter 12

- Do you feel, or have you felt, that it’s too late for you? Why?
- When has your life been like trying to plug up the hole in the bottom of the pool – the more you try to fix something, the worse it gets?
- Have you tried to make changes before that either didn’t work or didn’t last long? Look back through the list of questions on page 189 and 190. Were any of those true of you?
- What needs to be different this time if you’re truly going to experience AHA?

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

- Procrastination: We want to put off the pain ...
 - When I hiked on the Pacific Crest Trail one piece of advice I received stuck with me. Someone who had previously hiked on the trail told me, “Do not stay in your tent and the warmth of your sleeping bag when it is raining outside. You got to get up and go. It rains a lot up in the mountains. You won’t get far if you don’t get up and go!” I thought of that advice on the many occasions I was tempted to stay in my tent.
 - What advice and wisdom have helped you “get up and go” when you wanted to stay in your comfortable place?
- While it took the Prodigal son a while before he came to his senses, when he did it seems he knew what he had to do and he did it, “So he got up and went ...”
 - Discuss the reasons, mentioned by the author, that we are tempted to procrastinate instead of simply “getting up and going”?
 - We want to put off the pain ((pages 171-172)
 - We want to prolong the pleasure (pages 172-173)
 - We want to plan it to perfection (pages 173-176)
- Regarding the Zacchaeus story in Luke 19:
 - Why did so many others show up, line the streets, just to see Jesus?
 - Where was Jesus heading as He passed through Jericho? (*Jesus was headed to Jerusalem for the last time. There He was arrested, condemned, crucified ...*)



- Why do you think Jesus stopped, looked up at Zacchaeus, and invited Himself to his house?
 - Why were some upset that Jesus went with Zacchaeus, ate with him, stayed with him?
- Are there stories in the Bible that end without resolution, with a separation from God and others, because the person did not return to God?
 - Consider the story of Judas in Matthew 27:3-5
 - Judas had an awakening (he returned the blood money to the temple). Judas was honest with himself (I have sinned by betraying innocent blood). But, Judas did not return to Jesus, instead he took matters into his own hands (Contrast that with Peter who did return to Jesus after his public failure).
 - Consider the story of the rich man in Matthew 19:16-26
 - The rich man had an awakening (he came to Jesus asking about eternal life). He was honest (somewhat) with himself (he had a distorted view of his accomplishments but he was honest about what it would cost to do what Jesus said would bring eternal life ... he was sorrowful). He walked away when Jesus invited him to follow.
- Read the story of the two thieves crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:32-43)
 - What does their reaction to Jesus (consider Matthew 27:44 “And the robbers who were crucified with Him also reviled Him in the same way.”), and then the change in one of the two, tell us about them, and about the possibility of receiving God’s grace when it seems it is too late?
- Have you ever tried to fix a mistake, make amends for a sin you’ve committed, and it only made things worse? Explain.
- How much of our salvation, the restoration of our relationship with God depend on us? How much depends on the work of God? What percentage would you assign to us, and what percentage to God?
- Does God wait until we have cleaned up our act before He will receive us? Explain. What examples can you find in the Bible to support your position?
- What does it say about us, and our understanding of God, if we believe it is up to us to fix what we have messed up in our life and relationships?

There are no extra Questions from the official AHA Leader’s Guide for chapters 11 and 12

We are encouraging each AHA Community Group to discuss a mission they can invest in together and then actively engage that mission

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- **Adams Elementary School** (Contact Alex Rule: 248-7940 x113)
 - Deliver books to school age kids one Thursday evening, or one Thursday evening for the next few months. You would be joined by a member of the Adams Elementary / Grace of Christ team (Spanish speaking). You would receive books bundled for a particular student. Drive to their home and hand deliver.
- **Union Gospel Mission** (go to: <https://www.yugm.org/volunteer>)
 - Variety of ways to volunteer directly with Union Gospel Mission clients, or behind the scenes, on premise or from a distance.
- **Madison House** (See information at: <https://www.yugm.org/madisonhouse>)
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LOVE WELL WITH DROPS OF GRACE

Grace of Christ AHA Community Group Leader's Guide

AHA: Sudden **A**wakening | Brutal **H**onesty | Immediate **A**ction

For the week beginning November 29, 2020

Week 10 of our 10-week series | Chapters 13 in the AHA Book

Due to the recent re-imposed restrictions, our December 6 gathering is no longer an option. Please use your last AHA community Group gathering (by Zoom) to share ways God has spoken to you, revealed new insights, encouraged AHA (Awakening, Honesty, Action). Please record what is shared (*without names attached*) and pass along those stories to Curt (Curt@yakimagrace.com).

Zoom Meeting for Leaders: Monday evening we will be offering our final leader's Zoom meeting (4:30pm) to answer questions, offer assistance and support, whatever you need as a leader. Participation in this Zoom meeting is not required ... available as needed: **Zoom Meeting ID: 894 9073 0091 | Passcode: 2020**

What's included in this Leader Guide

Below you will find a **Focus Section** (highlighting what we believe will be most helpful for your AHA community group), and a **Supplemental Section** (with additional information that may assist you as you prepare). As always, the choice is yours. What works best for one group may not work for another.

This leader's guide will combine questions related to the final chapter in the AHA book, with questions about the Advent season we are now entering. Enjoy your last community group meeting ... until you gather again (with your same group, or with a new group, in 2021)

The goal of the time community group members have together is not to complete the list of questions ... it is growth in each participant's understanding of, and encounter with, the One Living God revealed in Jesus. The result, we pray, will be an increase in our love for God (Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength) and a growing love for ourselves and for others. We believe that community groups are THE best place God will use to provide the care and support we all need.

It is Important that each group member knows that if, *over the course of these weeks, they discover, uncover, an aspect of their life, their past, their present, that is so intense and painful they cannot share it with the group, or they are experiencing significant distress as they work through AHA, they can speak privately with you their group leader. You, as their leader, can offer support, and also refer them to one of the pastors. Deep wounds and pain can be healed, but not easily on our own. We need others to help us discover hope and life through the power and love of God.*



Leader's Guide Week 10: Chapter 13 "Lost in the Father's House – The Final AHA" (pages 197 - 209)

Focus Section

First (Gathering)

- Continue spending time as a group getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, before you turn to the questions. Expect this to take 5 minutes each time you meet.
- A playful Christmas Quiz, with answers, is included at the end of this AHA Leader's Guide. You may have seen this before, or some variation of it. Consider passing it along to members of your group ... hopefully laugh a little and enjoy a lot!

Second (Opening)

- Prayer
- Getting to know you questions you might consider:
 - Describe, or act out, one of your favorite scenes from a Christmas movie? Why is it one of your favorites?
 - If you could go back in time and re-experience a Christmas past ... which Christmas would you revisit and why?

The AHA book focuses on the parable of the lost sons (The Prodigal Sons) in Luke 15:11-32.

Third (Group Questions)

Each week invite members of your AHA Community Group to share what was most meaningful to them, or raised questions for them, in this week's chapter of the AHA book.

1. **Re-read Luke 15:29-32** "he (the older son) was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

- Spend 1 minute in silence reflecting individually on these verses. After, share any thoughts or insights you have related to this verse.
- What would you put in the "+" column for the older son, and what would you put in the "-" column?
- How would you describe the relationship between the father and his older son? Between the older son and his younger brother?
- If you were the father in this story what would you have said to your older son?
- Why was it difficult for the older son to celebrate with his younger brother?
- Is there anything you would add to the end of this parable to make it more satisfying for you?
 - Why does Jesus leave the end of many of His parables with "loose ends"?



2. In your opinion is it harder for someone far from God to turn their life around and yield to God, or is it harder for someone who is a good well-respected person to turn their life around and yield to God? See AHA pages 201-202. Explain your answer. Are there examples you can think of (without using names)?
- Quote from Presbyterian pastor and author Tim Keller (found on page 202) “The bad son was lost in his badness, but the good son was lost in his goodness.”
 - Do you agree with this quote?
3. How does an understanding of: 1) God’s grace offered to us, 2) our awareness of our sins and God’s forgiveness of our sins, 3) His mercy when we should have received judgment, 4) His love for us, affect how we respond to the sins and failures of others (see AHA book bottom of page 203)?
4. What is your relationship like with your heavenly Father? How does God see you? What would God say to you if you were to meet Him face to face?

First Sunday in Advent questions

5. Read the account of the birth of Jesus in Matthew (Chapter 1:18-25)

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel’

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”

- If you were reading or hearing this story for the first-time what questions would you have?
 - What does this story communicate about God and His relationship with us? (Is He a distant God not involved with the world He made or is He actively involved in a world He cares deeply about?)
 - How does the promise of “Immanuel: God with us” impact you in your day to day life?
6. How does the miracle of Christmas change your hope for your future? For the future of your children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren? For the future of this world?



Supplemental Section (Additional Resources for leaders)

Extra questions from the back of the AHA book for chapters 13 (page 217)

- Do you find it easy or difficult to accept prodigals when they return home?
- Knowing what we know about the older brother from the end of the story, can you understand his response to his brother's actions?
- From what we've learned about AHA, what are the next steps the older brother needs to take in order to experience AHA?
- Whether you are more of a younger brother or an older brother right now, what are your next steps towards experiencing AHA?

Extra Questions from Grace of Christ Leaders

- Some find going to church difficult because they feel they are being judged by all the good people in church. What would you say to those who feel this way?
 - If you could preach one sermon to the Church (Church worldwide, including our church in Yakima) what would it be?
- How would you respond to someone who told you they have to make up for past mistakes before God will accept them?
 - Does God accept everyone regardless of what they do or believe? Do we have any responsibility for our actions and beliefs? What does God require of us before welcoming us home?
- Are you the kind of person who demands justice, or the kind of person who offers mercy, when someone breaks the rules, commits a crime, hurts someone else?
 - What is your best definition for "justice" and "mercy"?
 - When you do something that breaks a rule, hurts someone ... do you want justice, or do you want mercy?
- How might "older sons" "good sons" (daughters too) misunderstand their relationship with their heavenly Father? How does their misunderstanding of their heavenly Father change their relationship with Him, with others? What do they miss out on because of their misunderstanding?
- Do you agree with the author (page 205) "Focusing on our own spiritual resume divides our spiritual family?"
- Read Luke 18:9-14. How does this story relate to the older son in the prodigal parable?
- Read the final story in the AHA book (pages 208-209). What is your response to this story? Does it tell us anything about God's response to us? Explain.

Extra Questions for the first Sunday in Advent (HOPE)

- Read Matthew 1:18-25
 - Why do you think God chose to enter human history the way He did?
 - How would we understand God differently if He had entered this world as the son of the most powerful king of that day?
 - What does the scandal of Jesus' birth (his mother pregnant before she was married) communicate?

There are no extra Questions from the official AHA Leader's Guide for chapters 13

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 - Variety of ways to volunteer directly with Union Gospel Mission clients, or behind the scenes, on premise or from a distance.
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Grace of Christ Christmas Quiz 2020

Read each question very carefully. When choices are given, read them all and then put a ✓ mark next to the correct one or ones. Put either a “T” or a “F” in the blank besides the true and false questions. Guessing is O.K., but cheating is an obvious Christmas season NO-NO!

1. Christmas has always been celebrated on December 25th. (True or False)

- ☐ True
☐ False

2. Joseph was from the town of:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bethlehem | <input type="checkbox"/> Jerusalem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nazareth | <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wapato | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the Above |

3. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camel | <input type="checkbox"/> John Deere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donkey | <input type="checkbox"/> Joseph walked, Mary rode a Donkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Both Walked | <input type="checkbox"/> Who knows? |

4. Mary & Joseph were already married when Mary became pregnant (True or False)

- ☐ True
☐ False

5. Bethlehem means:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> “House of Steel” | <input type="checkbox"/> “House of Bread” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> “Rock Group from Nazareth” | <input type="checkbox"/> “House of Pancakes” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> “Beth’s House” | <input type="checkbox"/> “O Little Town” |

6. What did the Innkeeper tell Mary and Joseph? (you can ✓ all correct answers)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> “Come back after the Christmas Rush” | <input type="checkbox"/> “There’s no room” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> “Sorry we don’t take American Express” | <input type="checkbox"/> “I have a Stable you can use” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> “You can sleep in my RV” | <input type="checkbox"/> We Just don’t know |

7. What was the name of the Angel sent to Mary to tell her the good news?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gabriel | <input type="checkbox"/> Al |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Randy | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frank | <input type="checkbox"/> Ted |

8. Jesus was born:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> in a Cave | <input type="checkbox"/> in a Hurry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in a Barn | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in a Motel | <input type="checkbox"/> at the old St Elizabeth’s Hospital |

9. A Manger is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> in charge of a Baseball Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Part of a horse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in charge of a store | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A stable of animals | <input type="checkbox"/> A trough where livestock feed |



10. According to the Bible, which animals were present at Jesus' birth?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cows | <input type="checkbox"/> Only one donkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep | <input type="checkbox"/> An elephant & a mouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible doesn't say | <input type="checkbox"/> Lions and Tigers, O My |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Two Turtle doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree |

11. Who saw, and followed, the Star that first Christmas? (check all correct answers)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shepherds | <input type="checkbox"/> Three Kings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Williamson & Alex Rule | <input type="checkbox"/> Wise Men |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the Above |

12. How many angels spoke to the Shepherds?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three | <input type="checkbox"/> A Multitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> A Host |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |

13. What sign were the shepherds told to look for?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A "No Vacancy" sign | <input type="checkbox"/> A baby lying in a manger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Jesus Here 3 weeks more!" | <input type="checkbox"/> A house with a Christmas Tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Star over Bethlehem | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the Above |

14. What was the message the multitude of Angels gave the shepherds?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Joy to the World" | <input type="checkbox"/> "When Love Comes to Town" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Let it Snow, let it snow, let it snow" | <input type="checkbox"/> "Angels We Have Heard on High" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Glory to God in the Highest..." | <input type="checkbox"/> "We Wish you a Merry Christmas" |

15. What exactly is a "Heavenly Host?"

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Angel who greets you at the gates of heaven | <input type="checkbox"/> An Angel Army |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Angel who seats you at the restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> An Angel Choir |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Angel in charge of refreshments | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An Angel who 'hosts their own angry radio talk show (1-800-DRANGEL) | |

16. The Baby Jesus cried:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Just like other babies cried | <input type="checkbox"/> He never cried |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Only after the little drummer boy began banging on his drum | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Because He didn't get what He wanted for Christmas | <input type="checkbox"/> After Joseph started peeling Onions |

17. What exactly is "Frankincense?"

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A precious metal | <input type="checkbox"/> A early Jewish horror movie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gum resin used in expensive perfume | <input type="checkbox"/> The way Frank smells |
| <input type="checkbox"/> none of the above | <input type="checkbox"/> The name of Jesus' best friend in Bethlehem |



18. What is "Myrrh?"

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What you say when you're cold | <input type="checkbox"/> A Christmas drink |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short for Murray | <input type="checkbox"/> An ancient book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A spice used as perfume and for burial | <input type="checkbox"/> Name of new dating website |

19. According to the Bible, how many people followed the Star from the East?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 341 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible Doesn't say |

20. "Wise Men" probably means they were:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Kings | <input type="checkbox"/> Astrologers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very, Very Old Men | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart enough not to step in any Camel Poop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Older "Wise" guys | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Bargain Shoppers |

21. The Wise Men found Jesus:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At the Holiday Inn Express | <input type="checkbox"/> In the Memorial Hospital Maternity Ward |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In a Good mood | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible doesn't say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In a Manger | <input type="checkbox"/> In a House |

22. The travelers from the East stopped in Jerusalem:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To tell King Herod about Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> To get Gas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To have their Camels washed | <input type="checkbox"/> To Christmas shop at Costco |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To find out where the new king had been born | <input type="checkbox"/> To grab a bite to eat at the Apple Cart deli |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To ask directions to Bethlehem | <input type="checkbox"/> To trade in their Camels for a Chevy |

23. The Star which the travelers from the East followed:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Was a U.F.O. | <input type="checkbox"/> Looked like Jimmy Stewart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Was a Comet | <input type="checkbox"/> Was Comet the Reindeer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeared, then disappeared, then re-appeared | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |

24. When Joseph found out Mary was pregnant what happened? (you can ✓ all correct answers)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> They talked to their parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Joseph wanted to break up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth threw Mary a Baby Shower | <input type="checkbox"/> They went to pre-marriage counseling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joseph had a weird dream telling him to marry Mary | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible doesn't say |

25. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An angel told them to go | <input type="checkbox"/> To visit Mary's mom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They had a Timeshare there | <input type="checkbox"/> To open a McDonald's franchise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caesar Augustus commanded a census of all people | <input type="checkbox"/> We don't know |

26. Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To see the Pyramids | <input type="checkbox"/> To see the King Tut exhibit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For the Holidays | <input type="checkbox"/> Because in a dream Joseph was warned about King Herod |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To put Jesus in a basket in the river | <input type="checkbox"/> So Jesus could learn to walk like an Egyptian |



27. How many of Jesus' brothers and sisters were there that first Christmas?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None, He didn't have any | <input type="checkbox"/> All Twelve |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three | <input type="checkbox"/> One |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two, (Donnie and Marie) | <input type="checkbox"/> Two (David and Goliath) |

28. Who sang that first Christmas?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frank Sinatra | <input type="checkbox"/> Burl Ives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angels | <input type="checkbox"/> The Innkeeper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jason and Nathan | <input type="checkbox"/> The Band U2 |

29. Where do we find the Christmas story so we can check on these questions?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke | <input type="checkbox"/> John |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts | <input type="checkbox"/> Wikipedia |

1. False, 2. "Nazareth" (Lk 1:26, 2:4), 3. "Who knows" (Lk 2:4), 4. False (Lk 2:5, Mt 1:18), 5. "Beth = house and lehem = bread", 6. "We just don't know" (Luke 2:7), 7. "Gabriel" (Luke 1:26), 8. "Unknown" (Luke 2:12), 9. "A trough where livestock feed", 10. "The Bible doesn't say", 11. "Wise Men" (Mt 2:1-2), 12. "One" (Luke 2:9), 13. "A baby lying in a manger" (Lk 2:12), 14. "Glory to God in the highest ...", 15. "An angel army", 16. "Just like other babies" (why wouldn't He cry? inferred from Philipians 2:7), 17. "Gum resin used in expensive perfume", 18. "A spice used as perfume and for burial", 19. "Doesn't say" (Mt 2:1, 2:11), 20. "Astrologers", 21. "In a house" (Mt 2:11), 22. "To find out where the king had been born" (Mt 2:2), 23. "Appeared, disappeared, then re-appeared" (inferred from Mt 2:9-10), 24. "Joseph wanted to break up" and "He had a weird dream", 25. "Because of Caesar Augustus" (Lk 2:1), 26. "Because in a dream Joseph was warned" (Mt 2:13), 27. "None, He didn't have any then" (Mt 1:25), 28. "Angels" (inferred Lk 2:13-14), 29. "Matthew and Luke"