

# SEAT AT THE TABLE

## *Week One: The Table Before Us*

### **GET TALKING**

On average, how many texts do you send or respond to each day? Is texting more of a convenience for you or an intrusion?

### **READ**

- 1** The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
- 2** He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,
- 3** he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.
- 4** Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.
- 5** You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.
- 6** Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever. PSALM 23

What image or description stands out the most to you in this psalm? Why?

What is it about Psalm 23 that people find so comforting and reassuring?

## WATCH VIDEO

### DISCUSS

According to Psalm 23, what are the attributes of your Good Shepherd? What does He promise to provide? How have you seen these traits as Jesus has led you?

How do you feel about being compared to sheep in this psalm (see also Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:4-7; 1 Peter 2:25)? In what ways does this comparison ring true based on your life experience? In what ways do you struggle to accept this comparison?

What are some of the “bad shepherds” in your life? Why is it often so tempting to follow them? In what ways are you tempted to be your own shepherd?

David didn’t always get what he wanted every day of his life. But he never lacked what he needed on any day of his life. How would you define the difference between the two?

How does your Good Shepherd make you lie down in green pastures? What does it look like in your life? Are you allowing Him to lead you in this area?

What comes to mind when you imagine the Good Shepherd preparing a table for you in the presence of your enemies? What does your “battlefield” look like at the moment? Why is it so important that your enemies are present but not invited to sit at your table?

### APPLY

What will you do this week to live something that you have learned tonight?

### PRAY

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like to lift up in prayer. Ask your Good Shepherd to help you recognize His voice in your life and focus on His ways instead of your own - and definitely not the enemy’s ways.

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## Week Two: The Tactics of the Enemy

### GET TALKING

What is the best thing that has happened to you so far this week?

### READ

Ask someone in your group to read Luke 4:1-13 and look for the tactics that Satan used in this scene and how Jesus responds to the attacks.

**1** Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, **2** where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

**3** The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

**4** Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

**5** The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. **6** And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. **7** If you worship me, it will all be yours."

**8** Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

**9** The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. **10** For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you carefully;

**11** they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

**12** Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" **13** When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. LUKE 4:1-13

What tactics did Satan try to use against Jesus? Why do you think that he chose this approach?

How did Jesus respond to each of Satan's temptations? What is the implication for you?

## WATCH VIDEO

### DISCUSS

What are some ways that you have experienced the enemy inviting himself to sit at your table? What are some of the lies he has tried to plant in your thinking to undermine your faith, joy, obedience, and peace?

How often do you compare yourself or aspects of your life to that of other people? Are there things that you tend to compare more than others? What is the cumulative impact of thinking that “grass is always greener on the other side”?

When have you felt powerless in trying to make certain changes in your life? How has the enemy used your attempts and failures to get in your head and make you feel you will never change? How does such negativity affect your identity and self-worth?

What are some areas in your life where you feel that you are not good enough or don't measure up to expectations? How do these represent lies from the enemy that you need to reject or personal accountability that you need to accept?

Which of the enemy's tactics tend to trip you up the most? Knowing that this may be a particular area of vulnerability for you, how can you better prepare and defend yourself against the devil's relentless attacks?

### APPLY

What is one thing you will do this week to reject the tactics of the enemy?

### PRAY

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like to lift up in prayer. Pray for the power to combat the devil's deceptions as you focus on drawing closer to the love of Christ.

# SEAT AT THE TABLE

## *Week Three: The Battle for Our Mind*

### **GET TALKING**

What are the main ways that God speaks to you? How does He guide you along the right paths?

### **READ**

Ask someone in the group to read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. Focus on the strategies that Paul recommends for winning the battle over our minds.

**3** For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **4** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. **6** And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete. 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-6

What does it mean to “live in the world” but to not “wage war as the world does”?

What are some weapons that Paul says are available to us to use in the fight?

What comes to mind when you consider taking every thought captive to Christ in order to make it obedient to Christ? How have you attempted to do this to change your life?

### **WATCH VIDEO**

### **DISCUSS**

Why is it so critical to win the battle over your thoughts? How do you respond to the idea that regardless of what has happened in your past, you have the ability to make “halftime adjustments” that will help you secure the victory?

When a thought enters your mind, you first have to identify that thought to see if it is coming from the enemy or from God. How successful have you been when it comes to identifying those thoughts that are from the enemy? What helps you to identify them?

What strategies did Satan use against Adam and Eve to convince them to sin? How does he use those same tactics today to exploit any “cracks” that he can find?

When you identify a thought that is from the enemy, how do you bind it in Jesus’ name? What does this look like in actual practice in your life?

What strategies did Jesus employ to fight against the enemy in the wilderness? What does this reveal about the importance of God’s Word?

What strategies have you found to be effective when it comes to living out the truth of God’s Word? How has this helped you win the battle of your mind?

### **APPLY**

What is one thing this week to test your thoughts and take captive the thoughts of the enemy?

### **PRAY**

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like to lift up in prayer. Ask God to protect you from the schemes and snares of the enemy. Thank Him for the ways that you are learning to identify and eliminate the devil’s presence at your table. Praise Him for the gift of His Son, Jesus, and the spiritual freedom you have to defeat the enemy and enjoy intimacy with the Good Shepherd for all of eternity.

# SEAT AT THE TABLE

## *Week Four: The Path to Victory*

### **GET TALKING**

Do you typically set New Year's Resolutions? Did you set any this year? Do you typically keep the resolutions that you set? What have you learned about yourself from such events?

### **READ**

Ask someone in the group to read aloud Ephesians 6:10-18. Underline or circle each piece of spiritual armor that Paul lists in these verses.

**10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

EPHESIANS 6:10-18

How does Paul describe the battle that is taking place in your heart, mind, and body?

What does it mean to "put on" the armor of God?

Which piece of armor do you need most in your life right now?

## WATCH VIDEO

### DISCUSS

“For as (a man) thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV). What is the connection between your thoughts and your actions? How have you seen the truth of this verse play out in your life or in the life of someone close to you?

Share a time in your life that you realized you had to make drastic changes to pursue the plans that God had for you? What factors caused this realization?

“But thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). What does it mean to fight the enemy from a place of victory? How does this change your mindset regarding the spiritual battles you face?

Think about how your life has changed since you put your faith in Jesus, accepting Him as your Good Shepherd. What are some ways that you are not “joined” with Christ in His death and resurrection?

What are some of the daily rhythms you have developed to remind yourself that your story is one of victory? What Bible verse or passage of Scripture do you rely on the most to remind yourself of God’s truth in the face of the devil’s deception?

### APPLY

What is one thing you can do this week to “put on” the armor of God and encourage yourself in the Lord this week?

### PRAY

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like to lift up in prayer. Ask God to protect you from the schemes and snares of the enemy. Thank Him for providing the spiritual resources that you need to defeat the enemy’s assaults. Praise Him for being your Good Shepherd and for protecting you. Ask Him to continually make you aware that you are operating from a place of *victory* rather than *defeat*. Pray that He will guide you on how to counter any lies the enemy tries to plant in your mind.

# ATA SEAT AT THE TABLE

## Week Five: God's Invitation Always Stands

### GET TALKING

What are some of the most notable ways that you have seen a person turn their life around? What led to this change in their life?

### READ

Ask someone in the group to read aloud James 5:13-16. Look specifically for what James recommends as it relates to the confession of sins.

**13** Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. **14** Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. **15** And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. **16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. JAMES 5:13-16

What are some of the benefits of being in community with other members of God's family?

Why does James tell us to confess our sins to one another? What does this look like in everyday life?

Based on what you've covered in this study so far, why do you think confessing your sins to another person stops the enemy's attacks against you?

### WATCH VIDEO

## **DISCUSS**

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## **APPLY**

What is one thing you can do this week to “put on” the armor of God and encourage yourself in the Lord this week?

## **PRAY**

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like to lift up in prayer. Ask God to protect you from the schemes and snares of the enemy. Thank Him for providing the spiritual resources that you need to defeat the enemy’s assaults. Praise Him for being your Good Shepherd and for protecting you. Ask Him to continually make you aware that you are operating from a place of *victory* rather than *defeat*. Pray that He will guide you on how to counter any lies the enemy tries to plant in your mind.

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## Week Six: In the Presence of Our Enemies

### GET TALKING

What does it look like to stay focused on God in the midst of trials, battles, and struggles of your day?

### READ

Ask someone in the group to read aloud 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. Consider what Paul writes about the access believers have to God the Father.

**12** Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. **13** We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. **14** But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. **15** Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. **16** But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

What does this passage say about the access that you have been given to God as a believer in Jesus?

How does the apostle Paul say that you should approach the throne of God? How could this approach change your day-to-day relationship with Jesus?

What is the end result of spending more time with God?

**WATCH VIDEO**

## **DISCUSS**

As we read David's words in Psalm 23, perhaps the most important question of all is why has God set a table in the presence of your enemies? The table is not set just in God's presence - it's set in the presence of the difficulties, the trials, the challenges. So, what is the table set there?

When have you experienced God's presence unexpectedly in the midst of a difficult time? How did your awareness of His presence affect your response to the situation?

What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God on a personal level? What are some ways that you seek to better know God personally?

Why is "lingering" so counterintuitive in today's world? What would it look like for you to "linger" in God's presence? What obstacles do you need to overcome to do this? What priorities do you need to set?

David wrote, "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame." (Psalm 34:4-5). How are you staying focused on the King at your table regardless of what is happening around you in the world?

## **APPLY**

What is the most significant truth you have learned through this study? How will this study help you to live in God's presence daily?

## **PRAY**

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like to lift up in prayer. Close with a time of thanksgiving to God, just lingering in His presence for a few minutes. Praise Him for the gift of Jesus, your Good Shepherd, and the victory that you have been given through His death and resurrection. Ask the Lord to show you ways that the enemy tries to get a seat at your table so that you can always be prepared to counter His strategies.