

SESSION 1:

A CONVERSATION ON WALKING WITH GOD

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONVERSATION

As your group comes together to journey through *A Conversation on Walking with God*, it will provide them with an opportunity to see Jesus afresh, to stir up a greater passion to know and experience God as well as allow them to pursue Him in such a way that they too can begin “to see the world through His eyes”.

SESSION 1: A CONVERSATION ON WALKING WITH GOD

GETTING TO KNOW THE FATHERS OF THE FAITH



"I can remember when I woke up one Sunday morning and I could not preach the ten page manuscript I'd worked all

week on. I was just out of it. And I walked down into the village square in Winnetka, Illinois, and it was 5:00 in the morning, and I had all the words and none of the music. And I didn't know what I was going to do. I had to preach at 9:30 and I had to get ready, but I was out of

Devries of the Winnetka Bible Church and I said, "Harold, what are you doing up so early in the morning?" He said, "I can't preach." He showed me his Bible with his notes and he said, "I just am out of it." I said to my desperate friend, "Harold, if you'll pray for me, I'll pray for you." So there at 5:30 in the morning, I got on my knees and Harold put his hands over on my shoulders and prayed for me, and then I did the same for him,

it. And I saw a man sitting on a park bench, and the closer I got, I realized I knew him.

And it was Harold and on Sunday afternoon he called me and he said, "Lloyd, we've got to do this every Sunday morning." We got together on Tuesday mornings and soon every pastor in that community was in this fellowship group and we'd spend a half hour sharing our needs and then a half hour studying the Scriptures and then praying for each other. And all through the years, in every parish, God has given me a fellowship of trusted brothers and sisters."



LLOYD OGILVIE



LET'S GET STARTED

For the next eight weeks we'll start with a brief discussion about the closing question of each session. Because this is our first time together, I thought it might be interesting for us to get to know each other a little by describing your “walk with the Lord”. Let's face it...it seldom is a perfect relationship...it seems some day's we're lagging behind Him...others, it seems we're waiting on Him to catch up with us! Then there are those seasons where it is just simply wonderful...where God is so close, you feel His presence...you understand His words...

Let's go around and just briefly describe a little where you are right now. No right or wrong answers...it's just us...all walking together in the next eight weeks getting to know a gracious God in more meaningful ways.

Let's start here...and just go around...then we'll get into this first session.

LESSON SET-UP

Thank you for sharing this so openly and early in our journey. There is a lot more to talk about for sure. This first DVD program has one unique feature and that is the host will introduce each of these “fathers” to us at the beginning of this first program. This will add 3: 40 to this first session. You might feel that Dr. Blackaby is not present in the larger group. That is correct. He had a prior commitment that could not be changed so we wove him in via our ‘solo sessions’ like you'll see with each of the other men as well.

OPENING PRAYER

As we have welcomed one another to this journey, now let us together ask the Lord to join us and direct not only our minds as we learn, but our hearts as we seek His Presence. Let's pray.
(Leader prays, but in the following gatherings he/she may ask other members to do so, with proper notice.)

PLAY DVD #1, PROGRAM #1

- “Welcome” / “Meeting the Fathers” (Run time: 3:40)
- “A Conversation on Walking with God” (Run time: 31:40)

See pages 70-71 for Technical Tips & DVD Assistance

SESSION 1: A CONVERSATION ON WALKING WITH GOD



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Listed below are five questions that will create a lively debate and thought-provoking discussion. You won't have time for all of them. We suggest using three, but we feel you are in the best position to determine which are the most appropriate questions for your group, taking into account their ages, spiritual maturity and familiarity with the Bible.

1. BREAK-THROUGH

Let's pick up this idea of a "break-through". Loren Cunningham used this expression; "a break-through of His Presence". He described it briefly: To break-through is to go to God immediately when you have a problem, things are stalled, insecurities set in or even a person that has brought hurt or disappointment, and respond with a prayer that expresses thanks and trust in Him for this challenge or problem...and then let it go. That is what I believe he means by "breaking-through."

A. What are your thoughts on this term "breaking-through?"

A break-through into God's presence also represents a restored sense of nearness or closeness to God where we once again know His presence with us.

B. Have any of you had an experience like this and felt this break-through into a sense of peace with God in the midst of a messy situation?

2. PREVENIENT

Let's talk about that word "prevenient" which Dr. Ogilvie described as "Christ going beforehand." Think of a situation right now in your life.

A. How you would feel if you knew that God has gone ahead of you to prepare the situation and prepare you for the situation?

B. What scripture comes to mind on this idea?

3. WALKING WITH JESUS

Our topic in this session is knowing Jesus and enjoying a daily walk with Him. We heard lots of terms; trustworthy, prevenient, I'll be with you, breaking-through with Christ, knowing His heart, practicing His presence and several others.

What terms or words would you add to these from personal experiences?

4. FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST

Winkie Pratney: have any of you heard of him before? He is quite a guy! He said that "the bottom line with God is that the work of the Kingdom is relational and based upon friendship."

A. Do you think that is correct? _____

B. What does that have to do with Jesus? _____

C. What does that have to do with my Christian friends? _____

D. What does that have to do with friends that aren't yet familiar with Jesus? _____

5. HE IS NO FOOL

I've looked ahead and know that we are going to get to know each of these men in some special ways. Dr. John Perkins...he is a very charming and genuine person...but he has lived a very hard life.

It is strange about quotes, songs or sayings that become famous because of one person...but then when said, sung or shared by someone else, the idea takes on a completely different meaning. Someone else can sing a Beetle's song, the president can quote someone else and athletes can recall famous quotes of others champions. Wasn't it interesting that Dr. Perkins, a beaten, parentless prisoner in a Mississippi jail, used a pretty well known line that Jim Elliott, a missionary martyr, said as a young student: It goes: "One is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

(Read it twice)

Has anyone ever heard that quote? What does that really mean to us?



DAVE'S DIRECTION

FOR THE LEADER OF THIS GROUP



DAVE BUEHRING

I had the privilege, along with 200 of my friends, to participate in the taping of this series at The Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, North Carolina. What a joy it was to see the culmination of over five years of prayer, hard work and steps of obedience playing out right in front of my eyes! It was an experience I will never forget, watching these godly men—with a combined 300-plus years of walking with God—interact with great humility while sharing seasoned wisdom. We all recognized that it was an historic and strategic gathering as none of us could recall something quite like this happening in our lifetimes.

From the very inception of this project, you and groups like yours were in our hearts and minds. Our desire was to capture on tape the ways of God learned by these "fathers"—including their missteps and mistakes—to provide an opportunity for learning, conversation and application. As a group leader, always prayerfully consider how to move your group from "hearing" to "doing"—aiming at real life application.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:24,25:

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

As you jump in to applying this opening session to the lives of your group participants, it is important to recognize that each person may have a different, and even, unbiblical view of God. I've believed for a long time that the image of God that you carry around in your heart and mind affects the way you live your daily life. If your concept of God is not aligned biblically, it can skew everything that you think and do. Listen well as people will reveal what they really believe about God—then point them to the truths shared in this session and to the Scriptures as the source of getting to know God for who He really is.

May you know God's hand upon you, and your group, as you begin your journey together!

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

Dr. Blackaby explained his relationship with God as similar to that of his relationship with his wife. He said it very simply and affectionately how he has lived and loved his wife for over 48 years: I spend time with her and I am always wondering what is on her heart that I could do for her? In our walk with God, how can this be so simple, yet we continue to miss out on a lot of joy and fulfillment. If next week each of us committed to spending more time with our spouse, friend or family member, what specific things could we do?

- 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

So if we were to spend more time with God and learning what is on His heart that we could do, what would that look like for us in this coming week? Let's find a new time with God and listen and learn what is on His heart that I could do?

- 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PRACTICE POINT

Dr. Blackaby said that Christians tend to be conservative theologically, but often practical atheist. He means that when it comes right down to daily living, we do not live out in our experience what we say we believe.

This week...start watching for the moments when you're living like a committed disciple of Jesus and the other times you found yourselves acting like God doesn't exist?

Be honest. We all do. Do we pray every day expecting it to be answered? Keep track of those situations in your journal next week and come prepared to talk a little about both.

Should be very interesting.

PRAYER

Determine in advance whether your class time will allow a single closing prayer or the entire group praying. This would be the time to ask for very specific prayer requests that directly affect each person's life or their families.

CLOSING QUOTE

REMEMBER THIS FROM DR. OGILVIE AND TAKE IT WITH YOU:

Christ is prevenient. He always precedes us in every situation and every need. Could it be that He has already experienced this week and can't wait to show Himself in it?