



## Lesson 2

To Begin ...

*Name one of your favorite teachers (this could be a teacher from your childhood, college, church, workshop, seminar, etc.). What made this teacher special? How did this teacher influence you?*

Hey Life Group Leaders! Welcome to Week 2 of our new Life Group Video Series, "Built Faith Tough," where we will study through several different Scripture passages dealing with building faith in Jesus! We hope that this series will be uplifting, challenging, and help you find your next step in your journey with God!

You have eight questions based the video lesson this week! Remember that these Leader Notes are to serve as a guide for further and deepening conversation with your Life Group, not as the answers! Enjoy this week's discussion and always remember to ask an extra question such as "Why do you believe that?" to draw out some more conversation from your group members!

To start off this lesson, you have a few questions bunched together that everyone in your group should be able to answer. They are personal, but you should have fun with them! Please make sure that your group feels the safety of sharing within the group. There is no right or wrong answer here. No snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

### Discussion Prompts

1. To enrich your understanding of Proverbs 27:17, look at the verse in its context-read Proverbs 27:14-19 and answer some or all of the following questions:

- What kind of a person do you imagine after reading Proverbs 27:14-16?
- In Proverbs 27:18, how are the images of "guarding of the fig tree" and "protecting the master" alike?
- What is the end result of both "guarding of the fig tree" and "protecting the master"?
- What parallels do you notice between Proverbs 27:19 and Luke 6:45?
- What kind of a person do you imagine after reading Proverbs 27:17?
- How does the imagery of Proverbs 27:17 contrast with Proverbs 27:14-16?
- How does Proverbs 27:18-19 build upon Proverbs 27:17?

Proverbs 27:14-19 reads, "If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse. A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand. As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. The one who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever protects their master will be honored. As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart."

Luke 6:45 reads, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

- Some answers may include that it is quite possible that a person who rushes over to shout a blessing, especially early in the morning when others may prefer to be resting, is probably insincere. And, quarrelsome nagging and a steady stream of unwanted advice is a form of torture. It is better to surprise people with words of patience and love. The condition of a person's heart indicates the true character of that person.
- Some answers may include that the faithful employees or volunteers who stand behind leader, do the back stage work that is not seen, who work very hard to make sure the job gets done and stays safe, those people deserve accolades.
- Some answers may include that the job gets done, the line is held strong, nothing is stolen, missing, or damaged, safety is upheld.
- Some answers may include that this is a reminder that our speech and actions reveal the true underlying beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. The good impressions we try to make cannot last if our hearts are deceptive. What is in your heart will come out in your speech and behavior.
- Some answers may include that there is a mental sharpness that comes from being around good people. And a meeting of minds can help people see their ideas with new clarity, refine them, and shape them into brilliant insights. This requires discussion partners who can challenge each other and stimulate thought – people who focus on the idea without involving their egos in the discussion; people who know how to attack the thought and not the thinker. Two friends who bring their ideas together can help each other become better, more godly human beings.

- Some answers may include that two negative examples of humanity followed by a positive.
- Some answers may include that acknowledging that godly people help to mature other godly people, and that helps us to see clearly enough to recognize those hard workers who may be behind the scenes doing tasks that make others look really good. Being able to acknowledge those behind-the-scenes people and share the honor with them reveals leader with a heart that is humble and healthy. Working together and respectfully honoring one another is how God intended people to live and thrive in this life as a community.

## *2. Who is sharpening you? Who are you sharpening?*

- Everyone in the group should answer these 2 questions. If you or someone else cannot answer one or both of the above questions, please pray for God to reveal a name for each question.

This is another question that everyone in your group should be able to answer and this may reveal a great deal about the people in your group. Allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

## *3. Who has sharpened you in the past? How did their example sharpen you? How did you sharpen them?*

This is another question that everyone in your group should be able to answer. Everyone has examples of someone in their lives that have been important to molding them into the person they are today. Some will have great examples and some will have more difficulty sharing because there is hurt in that area. Allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

4. In the video lesson, Sarah said, "God created us to fuel one another's faith, to be sharpened and to be a sharpener." With her words in mind, read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11; 2 Timothy 2:14-16; Titus 2:7-8; and 1 Peter 2:13-17. In what ways do these verses encourage us to set an example for others?

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 reads, "But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

2 Timothy 2:14-16 reads, "Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly."

Titus 2:7-8 reads, "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us."

1 Peter 2:13-17 reads, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor."

Some answers to this question may include that Christians are to encourage one another. A word of encouragement offered at the right moment can be the difference between finishing well and collapsing along the way. Be sensitive to others' need for encouragement and offer supportive words or actions. We must be careful to work through our disagreements. Don't let anything keep you from your work for and service to God. Be sure to live the way you want others to act. Then you will earn the right to be heard, and your life will reinforce what you teach. All are commanded to cooperate with the rulers as far as conscience will allow. We are to do this "for the Lord's sake" – so that his Good News and his people will be respected. In most aspects of daily life, it is possible and desirable for Christians to live according to the law of their land.

*5. Ultimately, believers are sharpened to accomplish God's mission. Ephesians 2:8-10 says that we are not saved by works, but we are God's handiwork created to do His good work. While the ultimate purpose of believers is glorifying God by sharing Jesus to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), each believer has unique purposes (or a calling). To reflect on your unique purpose, consider these questions:*

- *What burden has God placed on your heart?*
- *How have your past experiences prepared you for "such a time as this"?*
- *Where can you make a difference like no other?*
- *Who follows you and looks up to you?*
- *Who depends on you?*
- *What (or who) breaks your heart? What (or who) stirs up your compassion?*

Ephesians 2:8-10 reads, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Matthew 28:19-20 reads, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

All of these are questions that everyone in your group should be able to answer. They are pretty personal in nature. If you are a leader reading this ahead of time, first off THANK YOU and GREAT JOB! Secondly, consider reaching out to your group members in plenty of time to think through these questions and write down some possible answers. This group of questions may take some time to mull over and ponder. However, regardless of how you handle this, allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

*6. Take some time to pray for one another and the example that you are setting.*

Pray out your time together as a group. Remember to ask for prayer requests. Encourage one another to take steps, regardless of how small, toward Jesus and his kingdom.