

- How has answered prayer—or even unanswered prayer—helped you know God better?
- How deep is your sense of gratitude toward God? What can you do to help it grow deeper?
- Why does someone have to experience mercy in order to share it? What benefit does someone receive for sharing it?
- Are there any ways in which you can experience God in a group that you cannot experience Him alone?

WEEK 8: FEBRUARY 19-23 Matthew 5:21-24, 38-42

Jesus calls us to give up our right to anger and revenge. Safely in His kingdom and His love, we don't need to focus on our rights.

- How do you normally respond when confronted with evil? In Scripture, God speaks often of pursuing justice for others and hardly ever about pursuing justice for yourself. Why?
- How does knowing how God values you alleviate your need to avenge your dignity?
- Which is more important to you, not in theory, but in actual practice: possessions or acquaintances? Personal property or the kingdom of God?
- Do you place a higher priority on completing tasks or serving people? Why?
- Why do you think God so strongly opposes our judgmental attitudes? What can we do to get rid of them?

WEEK 9: FEBRUARY 26-28 John 10:7-11

We are sheep among wolves. God, however, has given us a powerful and perfect Shepherd on whom we can depend for protection and provision.

- Why do we tend to hang on to habits that don't make sense? Why are they so hard to break?
- What's wrong with the belief that life gets easier when we become a Christian? How can we survive—even thrive—in the struggle?
- How much of good shepherding depends on the sheep? How much on the shepherd? How comforting to you are the obvious answers to those two questions?

WALK THRU THE BIBLE

indepth

SMALL GROUP STUDY
GUIDE FOR **INDEED**



GOING DEEPER WITH *indeed*

indeed can be used not only as a personal devotional guide, but also as a teaching or discussion tool for small groups. The following discussion questions will help you go deeper with each week's readings, whether individually or in a group. More *indeed* resources can be found at www.indeed.org.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

The words of Jesus have the power to change lives forever—to heal, to forgive, to guide, and to awaken the heart to eternal truth. The weekday readings in 2007 will focus on these words. As the disciples learned from Him daily, so will we feed on every word from the mouth of the Lord.

The next two months, our primary theme will be the grace and mercy of the Savior. He came with a radical message of redemption for even the most unlikely candidates, and He demonstrated it with power, authority, and miraculous works. As you dive into the depths of His teaching, you will become increasingly aware that He is relentlessly pursuing a creation that has been broken by sin—and that He is relentlessly pursuing you.

WEEK 1: JANUARY 1-5 John 5:31-47; Luke 19:1-10;
John 3:16-18

The mission of Jesus reaches into the most unlikely places with the most unexpected kind of compassion. There's no hint of condemnation for anyone—absolutely anyone—who will accept Him.

- In what ways did Jesus demonstrate His authority? What are you doing to fall in line with His authority today?
- What reason did Jesus give for coming? To what degree does His purpose shape your attitudes and actions?
- What does it mean to believe in Jesus? In what aspects of your life today are you living by faith and not by sight?
- Do you live under any sense of condemnation? If so, why? How does the feeling of guilt shape your relationship with others?
- How closely does your mission match the mission of Jesus?

WEEK 2: JANUARY 8-12 Matthew 5:3-10

Our experience of the kingdom of God begins in the heart because our attitudes and desires will shape our relationship with God. Jesus paints a picture of a kingdom citizen in the beatitudes.

- In what ways does Jesus model a character of meekness? According to Psalm 2:7-8 and many other passages, what is His inheritance? To what degree are you experiencing both His attitude and His inheritance?
- If you were asked what you really hunger for, how would you answer? What are your biggest desires? Why do you think righteousness is fulfilling?
- How easily are you offended? How easily is God offended? What can you do to reconcile the difference?
- When someone offends you, is your first reaction to feel judgmental or to feel merciful? What practical steps can we take to become more merciful?

WEEK 3: JANUARY 15-19 Matthew 9:9-13

This week we examine only one key verse. Why? Because (1) this verse expresses the mission Jesus fulfilled; and (2) this verse expresses the mission the church has often forgotten. On both counts, it's a critical truth for us to understand.

- In what ways do you feel disqualified from being greatly used by God? What would Jesus say to those who feel qualified? To those who feel unqualified?
- Which attributes of God can be revealed in a fallen world that can't be revealed in a perfect world?
- What does God require of those who have received His mercy? If we are being conformed to the image of Christ, how will our attitudes change?
- When you hear people talking about the sin of another, do you feel drawn into the discussion? Why?
- What is the relationship between your sense of mercy and the power of your prayers? How can you keep the enemy from hindering your prayers?

WEEK 4: JANUARY 22-26 John 16:5-15

Not only does Jesus pursue us with His mercy and tell us that we should demonstrate it, He also promises to live it out in us and through us. When we live in His Spirit, we embrace His mission.

- Do you find yourself wishing you could have seen and heard Jesus when He was on earth? How is it better to have His Spirit now?
- What is the Holy Spirit's highest priority for you? What do you desire most from Him? Does one need to be fulfilled before the other?
- In what ways is your salvation a one-time experience? In what ways is it a lifelong process?

- In your struggles in life, do you feel discouraged and defeated? How can fellowship with the Holy Spirit change those feelings?
- What is Jesus doing in your life today? this week? this year?

WEEK 5: JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 2 Luke 15:11-32

Jesus' best-known parable is often seen from the viewpoint of the son who left home and wasted his father's inheritance. This week we look at it from the viewpoint of the father, whose overwhelming love for his son cannot be quenched.

- Many people see God as stingy, giving us only what we need and never what we want. What does this parable say about that?
- Have you ever felt as if the Father turned His back on you? What made you feel that way? How do Jesus' words change your perception?
- From your perspective, how hard have you sought God? From God's perspective, how hard has He sought you?
- The prodigal son went looking for a party and found despair. He came back in despair and found a party. Have you experienced this dynamic in your life?
- How well does your heart for prodigals match God's heart for them?

WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 5-9 Mark 10:13-16; 35-40; Luke 17:7-10; Matthew 20:20-28; 23:1-12

Human beings are always aiming for bigger and better. Jesus is always pointing us lower and simpler. This week explores several passages in which humility is the key to God's blessing.

- How much analysis, stress, planning, anxiety, and performance go into a child's faith? How can your faith become more childlike?
- What would it cost you for God to answer your current biggest prayer request? Are you willing to suffer that cost?
- In what ways can we cultivate an attitude of service?
- How often do you find yourself doing something, wearing something, or saying something simply to make a good (or even false) impression on others?
- How does the world define greatness? How does Jesus define it? Which definition are you seeking to fulfill?

WEEK 7: FEBRUARY 12-16 Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 7:36-47

Forgiveness isn't our only need when we come to God, but it's our first one. In the process of seeking it, receiving it, and sharing it with others, we participate in God's redemptive plan and demonstrate love for Him.

- How easy is it to forgive yourself? Does your attitude toward yourself match God's?