

# WHO ARE MY TEAMMATES?

**GROUP TIME**

## HUDDLE UP

How would you define the word “revival?”

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As Tony Evans said, the issue of racial reconciliation won't be resolved through social structures, but only by God and on his terms. How have you seen that truth being played out in our society lately?

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## FILM STUDY

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# STUDY THE PLAYBOOK

## Luke 6:12-16

- 1 What does verse 12 indicate to you about the vitality of Jesus' selection of the right people?
- 2 What does that verse tell you about the character of Jesus?

### JESUS' DEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER

- *"... The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (John 5:19).*
  - *"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38).*
  - *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them ... " (John 6:44).*
- 3 Imagine you are one of these chosen disciples. What would you be thinking and feeling? Undeserving? Scared? Honored? Humbled? Loved? Something else?

## John 15:9-17

- 4 Why is love an important key to being part of Jesus' team?
- 5 In what ways did Jesus choose them and in what ways did they choose to be on Jesus' team?
- 6 When you choose to be on Jesus' team, what does that imply about who "calls the plays" in your life?
- 7 How does being under one banner affect how our team works together?

## THREE CONVICTIONS OF GREAT TEAMS

### DIVERSITY Team: Acts 10:34 and Ephesians 2:14, 19.

Discuss:

- In what ways was Jesus' group diverse?
- Why do you think it took Peter so long to realize what he did in Acts 10?
- How does the Ephesians passage encourage us to treat one another?
- How does diversity make the church stronger and more the way God desires it to be?

### LOYALTY Team: John 6:66-69

Discuss:

- What does this passage reveal to you about our choice in being a part of Jesus' team?
- What would it take for the disciples to keep following Jesus even when others were bailing on him?
- In what ways does loyalty build chemistry and cohesiveness on a team?
- How does loyalty make the church stronger and more the way God desires it to be?

### MATURITY Team: Acts 5:29, 33, 40-42

Discuss:

- Why would the disciples rejoice after having been flogged?
- How did they demonstrate great maturity as followers of Jesus?
- When life gets tough, how can being part of a group of brave teammates help you to keep standing strong?
- How does maturity make the church stronger and more like God desires it to be?

# BREAK THE HUDDLE

## MEMORY VERSE

“Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined; and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.”

Matthew 12:25

This week, look for ways to build bridges, and unite with others who may look different, act different and be different than you.

## NEXT UP

Complete the six sections in the *Personal Journal* before the next group experience. Use these in your daily time with God over the next six days to help you reflect, evaluate, dig deeper into God’s Word and put into practice what you’re learning.

## PERSONAL TIME

# WEEK ONE, DAY ONE

Read Psalm 80.

## THEME VERSE

“Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved” (Psalm 80:3).

Welcome to Day 1 of your personal time with God. Through this journal, you will reflect and evaluate, dig deeper into God’s Word on specific topics related to spiritual revival and put into practice what you are learning. To begin, write down what you are currently thinking or how are you feeling about the idea of spiritual revival.

The Bible records what some call the greatest breaking-up-and-getting-back-together story ever told. God loves and provides for his people, they eventually take him for granted and wander from him, God does something to get their attention and they come back—or so it appears. Then the cycle starts all over again. 1 Samuel 7:2 is just one place that records an occurrence of reconciliation, restoration and revival: “Then all the people of Israel turned back to the Lord.” Where do you think we are in that cycle today? Why?

Today's verse is actually a refrain, repeated three times in Psalm 80 (also in verses 7 and 19). It's the psalmist Asaph's petition to God on behalf of the people of Israel. Restoration means bringing something back to its former, normal or right condition. What do you believe most needs to be restored in the church, nation or world today?

In verse 18, the psalmist says to God, "Revive us, and we will call on your name." Revive means to bring back to life or consciousness. With this in mind, consider the nation, the church, your group, your family, or, most importantly, yourself. What "revival" needs to take place today?

Throughout Scripture, we find God's people praying for revival. This is where it starts! God desires for us to return to him, and he is actively drawing people to himself (John 6:44; 12:32). Look at the following phrases from Psalm 80, and then use them as prompts to write out your own prayer.

- "Hear us, Shepherd of Israel . . . Awaken your might; come and save us" (vv. 1-2).
- "Return to us, God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine" (v. 14).
- "Restore us, Lord God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved" (v. 19).

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# WEEK ONE, DAY TWO

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**Read Acts 19:1-22.**

**THEME VERSE**

“In this way the word of the LORD spread widely and grew in power” (Acts 19:20).

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The Book of Acts is a book of revival. A handful of uneducated, ordinary folks who had followed Jesus started a church that turned the world upside-down. Look at just a few of the updates along the way:

- “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41).
- “But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).
- “Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the LORD and were added to their number” (Acts 5:14).
- “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

Imagine what it would be like to be part of a revival like that. How would you feel being involved in a similar spiritual revival today? What part would you play in it?

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Part of the revival that took place in Ephesus in Acts 19 occurred as believers were convicted of their wrongdoing, confessed their sins and then turned away from their worldly, evil practices (vv. 18-19). What part must believers play if revival is to happen today?

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The revival that took place in Ephesus was described like this: “the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” The “word of the Lord” refers to the gospel message that was being preached across the land (see also Acts 6:7; 12:24 and 13:49). What keeps the gospel message from spreading widely and growing in power today? What needs to happen to change the current condition?

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Perhaps the revival that occurred in Ephesus can be traced back to the way the apostle Paul prayed for the believers there. Read his prayer, and then use it as a prompt to write your own prayer for your church and/or small group.

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:16-21).

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## WEEK ONE, DAY THREE

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**Read 1 Corinthians 15:30-34; Proverbs 22:24-25.**

**THEME VERSE**

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

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For revival to take place, it’s vital that you make certain you choose the right team—Christ’s team. It’s paramount who you choose to have on your team as you seek to walk with Christ and carry out his mission. A modern proverb says, “Your companions are like the buttons on an elevator. They will either take you up or they will take you down.”

Take some time to evaluate your current traveling companions. Think of your closest allies. Who takes you up or who takes you down?

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What have you seen happen when a Christian surrounds himself or herself with people who do not live Christlike lives? How do they deal with temptation? How well do they grow in becoming more like Christ? How strong and successful is their witness for Christ? How bold are they in proclaiming the Good News?

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Do you believe the opposite of today's verse is true? In other words, does good company promote good character? If not, why not? If so, how?

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In what *specific* ways do your Christ-following friends (including the people in your group or class) ...

- Encourage you (Hebrews 3:13)?

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- Spur you on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)?

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- Pray with and for you that God will open a door for your message and that you will proclaim the Good News clearly to people in your circles of influence? Pray that you will be wise in the way you interact with non-Christians and that you wisely use every opportunity that God gives you (Colossians 4:2-5)?

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Now turn the questions above around. Take a moment to reflect on yourself. Are you “good company” for your Christian friends? How would your friends, family members and fellow group members respond to the previous question if they were thinking of you?

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Close today’s personal time by asking God to help you be the kind of friend others need to help them be strong and courageous followers of Christ and witnesses for him. Open your Bible to Colossians 4:2-6 and use it to prompt you to pray for your friends.

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## WEEK ONE, DAY FOUR

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### Read Daniel 3.

#### THEME VERSE

“Then Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God’” (Daniel 3:28).

Have you counted the cost of being a committed follower of Jesus? For radical disciples of Christ, the possibility or presence of persecution is real (see 2 Timothy 3:12). In fact, Peter called this kind of suffering for being a Christian a “fiery ordeal” (1 Peter 4:12). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were three people who counted the cost and found themselves walking literally through a fiery ordeal. Together, these three courageous men stood up to opposition and persecution, and they did not back down (see vv. 16-18).

If you were to go through a “fiery ordeal” because you follow Jesus, what two other people would you want by your side walking through it with you?

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Why did you choose them? What is it about their faith, character or commitment that causes you to select them?

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Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went through this fiery ordeal because they refused to worship the idol of their day and resolutely worshiped God alone. What idols in today's world vie for our allegiance to God? And in what ways do people in the world today face persecution if they choose to worship God only?

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Billy Graham said, "Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened." It's true. It's always easier to do things when we do them with a friend—whether it's standing up to inequality at work, injustice in the community, insensitivity within your friendship circle, dieting or

exercising. Good friends find strength in standing together. How have you seen this principle play out in your life?

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In Daniel 3:25, the king saw a fourth man walking in the fire: "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods" (Daniel 3:25). Here in the Old Testament, hundreds of years before Christ came to earth as a man, we have the appearance of God's son. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus promised, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." God has promised that he will walk through the fiery ordeals and the valleys with us (Psalm 23:4). Sit with that realization for a minute. When you go through difficulties, painful circumstances and persecution, you are not alone. You have friends, including Jesus, with you.

As you close in prayer, keep that realization with you. You are not alone. When you are carrying out his mission, Jesus has promised to be with you always—to the very end. Simply thank him for his presence with you now. Think of a trouble, difficulty or persecution you are going through. What is it?

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Thank Jesus that he will go through this with you. Then, if you don't already have them, ask the Lord for two or three faithful friends who will walk with you, as well. Then pray for your friends who may also be going through some fiery ordeals. Ask God to draw close to them and show them that he is beside them.

Today, call a couple friends and let them know you are there for them, no matter how hot it gets!

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## WEEK ONE, DAY FIVE

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**Read Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35.**

### **THEME VERSE**

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had" (Acts 4:32).

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Unity was a big deal to the early church—so much so that one of Jesus' last prayers was for his followers to be "one" (John 17:20-23). Later, the apostle Paul appealed to the churches to be in unity (e.g., Ephesians 4:11-13). What does "unity" in the church, a Christian group or team look like to you?

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The early church shared everything they had with one another (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32, 34, 35). How would that practice bring ...

### **Unity?**

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### **Strengthening of community?**

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### **Strengthening of the church's witness?**

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On a scale of zero to four, with zero being “not at all” and four being “totally true,” how much do the people in your church share everything they have? (One good test: Are there any needy people among you?)

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Now evaluate your small group or class using the same question:

0	1	2	3	4
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What would first need to change to restore the New Testament practice of sharing everything we have?

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As you watch most sports, you’ll notice athletes wear jerseys that have the team’s name on the front and their own last name on the back. A wise coach will remind the players, “We play for the name on the front of our jersey, not the name on the back.” In the heat of competition, you make decisions on behalf of the team rather than yourself, as there is a greater cause. The church is a team, filled with all sorts of names and labels, but ultimately the only name that matters is the one on the front of the jersey—and that’s the name of Jesus.

How will a focus on Jesus rather than on us create the conditions and opportunity for revival?

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Pray today for true unity in your family; your group, class, or team; your church, your city and the country. Pray that God will bring a sense of humility, the desire to put others’ needs above your own, a commitment to service and love for one another. As you pray, remember there is absolutely no room for prejudice in an environment of unity. Ask God to rid your church, city and the country of prejudice of all kinds. Ask him to bring you and others together, as only he can, and help all of you share everything with one another, so there are no needy persons among you.

Make this your prayer over the next 24 hours: “May we be one, Father, just as you and Jesus are one!”

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# WEEK ONE, DAY SIX

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**Read Acts 1:1-14.**

**THEME VERSE**

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

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A common goal can unite a diverse group. We in the church are a diverse group, but we’re united by our common goal—to be Jesus’ witnesses and make disciples of all nations as we go through our daily lives. Have you ever been a part of a diverse group or team in sports, in school, at work or somewhere else? Think about that experience. What was it like? Did you have a unifying common goal? What were the results?

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Jesus gave his followers a compelling, challenging vision of what they would become: his witnesses going near and far with the Good News. Groups, teams, churches and movements need vision. Without it, says Proverbs 29:18, the people are “unrestrained” (NASB) or “run wild” (NLT). Eventually they “perish” (KJV).

Do you know your church’s vision statement? Write it below. (If you don’t know it, see if you can find it on the church website or ask a church leader.)

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Does your group or class have a vision statement? If so, write it down:

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Do you have a personal vision for your future? Write it below:

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The vision Jesus thrust upon these unschooled ordinary men in Acts 1:8 was an incredible responsibility! The word witness implies far more than just standing up and giving a record of what you have seen and heard. The Greek word is *martyros*, from which we get the

English word "martyr" and the French get their word "marquee." These men were being called to stand out, to be marquees—giant billboards easily seen—and openly announce their dedication to Jesus. They were also called to be martyrs. Every one of these men, with the exception of John, was executed as a result of his companionship with Jesus.

With this in mind, how do you feel about being a witness—a large marquee openly announcing your allegiance to Jesus, or a martyr, prepared to give your life if necessary for your commitment to Jesus and his call?

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The diverse group of disciples to whom Jesus first gave this vision and mission would reach people of all nations, races, genders, religious backgrounds, political affiliations and every other diversity (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). They would, by necessity and as modeled by their Master, reach out to people who were not like them, with whom they didn't agree, whom they were taught as children to despise, who also had prejudices toward them. The vision guided them to look past all these things to see what was ultimately most important: the people's need for Christ.

What will it take for you, your group and your church to look past prejudices to see what is ultimately most important?

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What will you do to carry out the vision Jesus gave you? Remember: "It only takes one person to start a revolution."

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Acts 1:14 says that these early disciples, to whom Jesus entrusted his vision and mission, "met together and were constantly united in prayer" (NLT). Prayer is the power source for revival. It's vital for you to personally pray for revival and for your group and church to meet together and be united in prayer. Pray today that you and other Christians in your city and around the world will engage in God's vision for revival. Pray first for revival in what is closest to you: yourself, your family, your small group and so forth. Ask God for the humility needed to hear and obey him. Pray also for your leaders, that God will envision, encourage and empower them for his mission.