

THE 2010 LINKS PLAYERS BIBLE STUDY

Produced by Links Players International • Written by Links Players Editor Jeff Hopper



This study is designed to accompany the 2010 Links Players magazine. To obtain copies of the magazine at no cost other than shipping, please call us at 800-90-LINKS. We will gladly furnish them as long as supplies last.

Lesson 1: A life submitted to God

Begin by reading “Building a Legacy,” by Bernhard Langer.

It is a common practice for preachers to ask people to consider what they would have written on their epitaph, as a spark to provoke us to think about—and perhaps change—how we are living today. Compare this to Bernhard Langer’s take on allowing his legacy to be measured by others. How does each of these approaches offer merit to our life’s course?

Contemporary cultural use of the phrase “born again” has often commandeered or sarcastically negated its original meaning. While many have thought this expression to be a sort of “Christianese,” it has its genesis in Jesus’ own teaching to Nicodemus. *In your Bible, read John 3:1-7.* What specifically did Jesus mean when He said we must be born again?

Why do you think that some people consider the profession of one’s being “born again” to be inauthentic or cheesy? How might the life we live after being born again have an influence on how people who have not had this experience in Christ interpret it?

Have you ever considered your own need to be born again? What has been the result of this consideration?

Lesson 2: The encouragement of friends

Begin by reading “Some Relaxed Words Among Friends,” with Natalie Gulbis

In here interview, Natalie Gulbis speaks of three kinds of encouraging interaction among Christian friends—one-on-one, small groups, and church involvement. Note here one or two advantages of each that spring to mind:

Individual interaction _____

Small group exchange _____

Church participation _____

The apostle Paul’s letters were always a combination of his teachings about Jesus by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and words from his loving heart for the people would be reading them. Using 1 Thessalonians as an example, read and consider the following passages:

Chapter 1, verses 2-3 - What did Paul and his co-writers Timothy and Silvanus remember before God in prayer about the Thessalonians? Who are some friends about whom you could remember the same things?

Chapter 2, verses 7-12 - How did Paul and his colleagues approach their ministry to the Thessalonians? What challenge does this bring to us when we are given similar opportunities in our friendships?

Chapter 3, verses 1-10 - How does this passage reveal the depth of Paul’s love for his Thessalonian friends? What is the thing that gives them the greatest joy (v. 8)? How does this passage help define the desire we should have in our own friendships with our Christian friends?

Lesson 3: The ordering of priorities

Begin by reading “Letting Go of the Trophies,” with Kevin Streelman.

Kevin Streelman’s story includes a common theme: a time of youthful wandering from God replaced by a purposed return to Him when we grow older. Consider David’s words in Psalm 25:7 (ESV): “Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD!” Why do you think we are often more prone to sin in our youth? How does this passage instruct us with regard to confession and God’s forgiveness?

After winning \$1 million in the Kodak Challenge, Streelman shared a large portion of his winnings with family members and favorite ministries, saying, “It’s not my money anyway.” How is this perspective and action in keeping with Scripture as laid out in Matthew 6:19-21 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19?

Often when considering how we might serve the Kingdom of God, we mistakenly look to our resources, thinking that if we had more money or more skill or more time, we could do more for God. If we instead consider first our priorities (Matthew 6:33), we are in an excellent position to serve God with exactly the resources He has given to us. How have you erred in the past with regard to setting priorities in your life? How do Kevin Streelman’s story and the Scripture you have read today help you to reset your priorities?

Before heading into your day, meditate on one of Kevin Streelman’s favorite verses, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, and how it points to the One who transforms us and enables us to rebuild our priorities.

Lesson 4: The nature of your journey

Begin by reading “South and Back,” by Frank Beard.

Frank Beard’s personal story involved many years of wandering and searching for through solutions that the world offered to him. In what ways do you identify with his times of confusion and darkness?

Read the account of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:1-37. What grueling circumstances did God take Nebuchadnezzar through?

How was this time of desperation used by God to draw Nebuchadnezzar to Him?

Looking specifically at verses 36 and 37, how was Nebuchadnezzar’s entire approach to his rule changed by his time in humiliation?

This article was based on a public interview conducted with Frank Beard at an outreach in California. Once the article was crafted, Beard declined to review it, saying that everything he had said had been given to him by the Holy Spirit, and that he trusted the article on that basis. How is this in keeping with Jesus’ teaching in Luke 12:11-12? How does this passage offer you confidence in speaking of what God has done for you as well?

Lesson 5: Will miracles never cease?

Begin by reading "A Far Better Sandwich," with AJ Montecinos.

Sometimes when we read a story like AJ Montecinos', we dismiss the possibility of such things happening in our own life. Take a while today to read these accounts of God's miraculous work among His people, supplying their needs and working His plan in their lives.

1 Samuel 1:1-20 - What evidence do we find of Hannah's heart, intent on her desire to have a son? How did God respond to her plea?

Mark 7:24-30 - This woman pressed Jesus on behalf of her daughter. How did her reasoning and faith convince the Lord to respond favorably?

Acts 3:1-10 - What did this man request of the apostles? What were they able to give him in the name of Jesus?

Read Philippians 1:26-38

How do Mary's interaction with the angel and the angel's confirmation that "nothing is impossible with God" encourage your own faith at this time? What miracle do you need to plead with the Lord for today?

Lesson 6: Building and enjoying togetherness

Begin by reading “Community: Why We Matter to Each Other,” by Jeffrey Cranford.

In what ways does this article advance the fact that followers of Christ inspire and strengthen one another for good works in Him?

Read Hebrews 10:19-25.

Jeffrey Cranford writes of how, when people have drawn nearer to God, they also begin to draw nearer to one another. In what ways does this passage in Hebrews support this truth? How, specifically, will you look for changes in your own life according to this passage?

Now read Acts 2:42-46 and 32-37.

What elements of Christian community do we find in these accounts of the early church? Which of these do you feel led of the Lord to add to your own life and community today?

How does this lesson bring us back to Jesus’ compelling words, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13)? How is Jesus’ own example to us of life-giving love help us establish the chief thrust of our life as we share it with our brothers and sisters in Him?
