

THE 2012 LINKS PLAYERS BIBLE STUDY

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



This study is designed to accompany the 2012 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: The heart of a child

Begin by reading “*Maybe It Is All Just Child’s Play,*” by Mark Wilson.

When set against the typical “drive” of those conditioned to succeed these days, such as professional athletes, what do you find in Mark Wilson’s words and perspectives that is particularly refreshing and encouraging to you?

In your Bible, read *Luke 18:15-17*.

Why do you think the disciples rebuked the people for bringing the children to Jesus? What was Jesus’ reason for receiving the children gladly?

How would you define the differences between the way children offer their faith and the way adults do?

What do you see of yourself in the disciples? What do you see in yourself in terms of childlike faith?

Read *1 John 2:12-14*. The apostle John refers to his readers as “dear” or “little” children twice here and as many as eight other times in this letter. How does this phrase catch your attention in a fresh way today?

Lesson 2: Direction in life

Begin by reading “Fresh Purpose” by Butch Seal and “Tom Lehman’s eyes turn toward the inner city” with Tom Lehman.

Butch Seal talks about the days when his heart was captured not just for the “nice idea” of Jesus, but for a real connection to him and a life dedicated to him. Have you ever reached a similar point in your life? Recount that story briefly here, then share it with someone else who is studying with you. (If you have not made this kind of move toward Jesus, what would you say are the main factors holding you back?)

In your Bible, read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Would you consider Butch Seal and Tom Lehman as examples of this kind of living? Who is someone closer to you who has demonstrated this kind of generous lifestyle to you? What level of generosity are you trying to cultivate in your own life?

Read Ruth 2:1-23. What demonstrations of noble character on behalf of a needy person does Boaz display in this account? From whom did Boaz draw his example (see verse 12)? For whom might God be calling you to be a Boaz?

Read Isaiah 58:1-12. What kind of impact on the world is God looking for from those who authentically call his name? How does this kind of living blend with James’ New Testament words in James 1:27?

Lesson 3: Measures of satisfaction

Begin by reading “A Season for Standing Alone,” with Tom Lehman.

Looking at Tom Lehman’s two key words for success—*attitude* and *effort*—how would you assess your own approach to accomplishing the things set before you? Are you stronger in attitude or in effort, and how do you know?

In your Bible, read Psalm 31. What phrases reveal David’s satisfaction? What phrases reveal his dissatisfaction? How does the passage show us that a certain brand of dissatisfaction is acceptable for believers?

Read Romans 7:14-25. Over what did the apostle Paul express severe dissatisfaction? For what was he yearning instead? How do you identify with Paul’s lamenting here?

Now read Romans 8:1-4 and 9-11. What satisfying contrast did Paul move into in these passages? Continuing on to Romans 8:26-39, list (or underline in your Bible) the many aspects of our relationship with Jesus that allow us to be wonderfully satisfied in him.

Lesson 4: A commitment to others

Begin by reading “Married to Golf,” with Martin and Gerina Piller.

What aspects of the Piller’s young married relationship are refreshing to your own picture of deep friendships? In what ways do you need to fight against the jaded cynicism that can arise when we pass through more and more earthly relationships—at work, in our neighborhoods, in our families, and even in our churches?

In your Bible, read *Ephesians 5:21-33*. Because of the overall context, many readers miss the fact that verse 21 addresses all believers, not just married couples. How would you describe the practical application of the phrase “submit to one another”? Why do you think this is so important to our revering Christ?

Now looking at verses 22-33, in what ways do we see that Jesus’ life and example should be woven into the way we address one another, and especially as a husband relates to his wife and a wife to her husband?

Read *John 13:35* and *1 John 4:7-21*. What is meant to be the earmark of Christian relationships? How do we best attend to the development of this trait as we walk with Jesus?

Lesson 5: The battle to be true

Begin by reading “You Make Me Laugh,” with Jeff Allen.

In your Bible, read 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1. What guidelines do we find here for interacting with common elements of our culture, such as entertainment sources? With this passage to facilitate your thinking, how might you alter the way you make choices about what to expose yourself to?

Read Galatians 5:13 and 1 Peter 2:16. These passages remind us that there is a limit to the freedom we have in Christ. What defines that limit? How might we use both God’s word and God’s people to help us keep our freedoms in check?

In the article, Jeff Allen speaks openly about his struggles with anger on the golf course. Then he goes on to talk with Jeff Hopper about Satan’s attempts to get us to think we’re the only one. After reading James 5:16, reflect on the value of confession, both as it leads to your own spiritual healing and the spiritual healing of other believers.

Consider Jeff Allen’s closing statement about his thankfulness for the enduring love of his friends. What friends do you have to thank God for, and what does each particularly contribute to the growth of your faith in Jesus?
