



ENGAGE

Break the Ice: (The purpose of these first questions is to help your group open up. Please don't feel like you have to ask each question. You may even have a better question. Once you feel that the group is engaged, move on to the "Inspire" section.)

- If you could choose one superpower, which would it be: a) Resistant to fire b) Breathe underwater c) Invisibility d) Able to fly
- What did God teach you during the message this weekend? Did anything in particular stand out?

Prayer: Take some time to pray for God's Spirit to speak to your group through His Word.

INSPIRE

(Since the group may need time to process each question, don't let silence scare you. Try to avoid filling the space with unnecessary explanation or moving on from the question too quickly.)

1. What purpose does a breastplate serve?
2. What is righteousness? (see Psalm 119:172; 1 John 3:4; 1 Corinthians 15:34; Romans 4:20-22; 2 Timothy 2:22)
 - Why is righteousness associated with protective armor like a breastplate?
 - Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8. How do faith and love relate to righteousness?
3. We've all heard and probably used the saying, "Practice makes perfect." Is this true when it comes to our righteousness?
 - One of the most cunning tricks of the enemy is to get us to sink our energy into being righteous on our own (self-righteousness), instead of focusing on cultivating health and wellness in Christ. Phil mentioned that when we attempt to earn God's favor through self-righteousness we end up with feelings of:
 - a) doubt and despair (frustration) — "God is displeased and disappointed with me. I'm never going to earn his love."
 - b) pride (false hope) — "God must be pleased with me. After all, I'm better than a lot of people I know."
 - Which one (if any) do you struggle with the most?
4. Read Romans 3:21-23. Why does Christ's righteousness need to be imputed (credited; ascribed) to us?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. When we place our faith in Jesus, our sin is imputed to Jesus and His righteousness is imputed to us.
 - Is this a fair exchange? Why would God do this? How does this make you feel?
6. Read Galatians 2:20.
 - What is our proper response to what God has done for us in Christ?



EQUIP

(These questions will challenge your group members to apply the study to their daily lives. It is highly important that you go over this section with your group each week for the group study to be a success. Set aside 15-20 minutes at the end of your study to go over this section.)

When it comes to righteousness, our desires and actions will change from an outflow of the Spirit's work in our lives (which we can actively align ourselves with through spiritual disciplines). We know that true change **ONLY** comes from the Spirit. We **CAN** cultivate spiritual health that will aid in our growth in the Lord, but that is **VERY** different than trying to change ourselves. The enemy is very deceptive in this area. Let's be on guard!

1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, "Don't quench the Spirit." Quench means to "stifle" or "hinder."

Identify what is or has the potential to quench the Spirit in your life. (Note: Phil mentioned two things: worldly clutter and our will (selfishness)).

Prayer:

Take some time to pray for each group member's growth need. Pray for the Lord's strength and wisdom. Encourage one another in the Lord.

Equip Your Mind:

For our sake he made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God . ~ 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)