

GETTING REAL

A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped together, resting on an open Bible. The Bible is lying flat on a rustic wooden table. The person is wearing a dark-colored t-shirt. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the wood.

A SMALL GROUP GUIDE
TO SPIRITUAL AUTHENTICITY

GETTING REAL

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- PSALM 16:11

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

- JOHN 10:10

Jesus came to earth to offer you forgiveness of your sins. Eternity in heaven after you die. A direct communications line to the God of the Universe. But he also came that you may have life. Not the kind of life that you had before. Abundant life. Life to the full. Right now.

Are you experiencing that kind of life? Excited about opportunities to give other people “a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15)? Eager to spend more time reading the Bible and talking with God? Or would you describe your Christian experience more in terms of going through the motions and trying not to screw up?

Maybe it's time to get real. With God. With yourself. And with other men...who probably are going through struggles that are similar to yours.

This CLC program will help. It leverages Daily Strength for Men, a daily devotional written by a guy who found his faith in God renewed and strengthened by his own CLC experience. Scattered throughout that devotional are important topics that resonate with men like you. Getting Real organizes these topics into three studies - The Nature of God, Daily Living, and The Big Picture - each of which lasts about three months.

Before your group dives into one of these studies, however, you have an important task to complete.

The Bible is at the center of every CLC program. That's because it's essential for a man to get his daily strength from God's Word. In the studies here, as in every CLC program, you'll read Scripture, discuss it, and memorize it. The Word of God will take root in your heart, and you'll have a strong desire to have a regular time alone each day to seek God.

But a CLC program is much more than a Bible study. Each week, you will connect with the other men in your group. You may not know some of these men very well but, in even a few months, they may become much more than “guys at your study”. Through the dynamics of conversation in this sacred space - where each of you finds a freedom to express what you are learning, where you are growing, and where you are struggling - these other men will become your band of brothers, and your weekly meeting will be a place of great encouragement and strength.

So, if this is the first time your group has done a CLC curriculum together, then start by doing the introductory section entitled Fence Post Stories. In that section, your group will get to know each other better, as each guy in your group tells his story.

After that, you can pick your first three-month study. We think you'll enjoy the experience so much that you'll embark on another three-month study...and then a third.

You'll need one more tool to help you - a simple spiral-bound notebook. This is where you will write down the prayer requests of the other men in your group. The more you meet with these men, the more important these requests will become. Record them with care, and pray about them every chance you get.

Get ready to watch God at work...in your life, and the lives of the men with you on this journey.



CLC

DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN

GETTING REAL

A SMALL GROUP GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AUTHENTICITY

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SERIES: THE NATURE OF GOD

Week	Topic	Pages
1	Blessings from God	10-11
	01/05-01/06	The Image of God
	01/07-01/08	Working to Thrive
	01/31-02/01	Our Mighty Resources
	02/18-02/19	With Great Power
	08/29-08/30	A Good Neighbor
2	Goodness of God	12-13
	01/03-01/04	“Let There Be Light”
	05/07-05/08	Plenty and Famine
	05/15-05/16	Taste and See
	06/20-06/21	Forever
	12/21-12/22	No More Mr. Nice Guy
3	Grace of God	14-15
	07/24-07/25	Steadfast and Plentiful
	10/06-10/07	The Rock of Ages
	11/05-11/06	Paul the Sheep
	12/07-12/08	Fallow Ground
	12/15-12/16	Shameful Joy
4	Greatness of God	16-17
	04/07-04/08	Praising God in Uncertainty
	05/11-05/12	Great and Good
	07/22-07/23	A Wonderful Life
	09/24-09/25	Lighting the Darkness
	10/14-10/15	Extra! Extra!
5	Guidance of God	18-19
	01/29-01/30	Demanding a Benediction
	04/21-04/22	Moving to a New Pasture
	04/23-04/24	Rod and Staff
	06/26-06/27	A Spiritual Diet
	07/16-07/17	Good News for the Simple
6	Law of God	20-21
	01/31-02/01	Our Mighty Resources
	04/01-04/02	Happy and Blessed
	05/19-05/20	The Desires of Your Heart
	11/01-11/02	Not a Beast
	11/29-11/30	Your True Name

SCRIPTURE TO MEMORIZE

WEEK 5

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

NUMBERS 6:24-26

WEEK 6

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5

WEEK 9

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11 (NIV)

WEEK 12

The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.

PSALM 118:14

FORMAT OF YOUR WEEKLY MEETING

5-10 minutes	Share how God has worked in your life this week
5-10 minutes	Pray for the individual needs of group members
10-20 minutes	Discuss highlights of your personal study this week
20-30 minutes	Examine group discussion questions
5-10 minutes	Review Scripture memory and plans for next week
5-10 minutes	Have closing prayers



WEEK 1: BLESSINGS FROM GOD

SERIES: THE NATURE OF GOD



THE IMAGE OF GOD

DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN
JAN 5 | JAN 6

DAY 1

PASSAGE: GENESIS 1:24-28, 31

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- GENESIS 1:27



WORKING TO THRIVE

DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN
JAN 7 | JAN 8

DAY 2

PASSAGES: GENESIS 1:28-31
AND GENESIS 2:15-17

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
- GENESIS 1:31



OUR MIGHTY RESOURCES

DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN
JAN 31 | FEB 1

DAY 3

PASSAGES: DEUTERONOMY 6:1-2, 4-6
AND MARK 12:28-31

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."
- DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5



WITH GREAT POWER...

DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN
FEB 18 | FEB 19

DAY 4

PASSAGE: JUDGES 16:18-22, 28-30

But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.
- JUDGES 16:22



A GOOD NEIGHBOR

DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN
AUG 29 | AUG 30

DAY 5

PASSAGES: PROVERBS 11:23-30
AND JOHN 4:39-42

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
- PROVERBS 11:25 (NIV)

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How has God blessed you? **Why** has God blessed you?

What do these blessings reveal about the character of God?

What are some ways that you can express your thankfulness?

How have you used God's blessings to bless others?

What are some opportunities for you to bless others this month? This week?

THE IMAGE OF GOD



God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

—Genesis 1:27

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the third definition of the word “image” (exact likeness, or semblance) uses Genesis 1:27 as the example of the definition. So being made in the image of God means being made in the exact likeness or semblance of God. The Hebrew root of the Latin phrase for image of God, *imago Dei*, means shadow or likeness of God.

The word “semblance” usually refers to external appearance, but the Bible tells us that no one has seen God. (See Exodus 33:20, John 1:18, and 1 John 4:12.) When he spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4), Jesus said that God is “spirit,” and a spirit does not have physical attributes. The attributes of God that we bear, therefore, must be unseen qualities of God.

In his book *About You: Fully Human, Fully Alive*, author Dick Staub lists some of those qualities:

- **Creative:** Every person has the desire and ability to make things.
- **Spiritual:** Every person has a spiritual nature that, while unseen, is just as real as our physical nature.
- **Communicative:** God spoke creation into existence, and our ability to communicate reflects God’s ability to communicate.
- **Intelligent:** Just as God has a logical, orderly mind, each of us has a mind that enables us to think and learn.
- **Relational:** In Genesis 1:26, God says, “Let us make man in our image.” This reveals a relational interaction in the very nature of God. We were created for relationship because it “is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18).

- **Morally responsible:** Just as there are natural laws that govern the universe, universal moral laws govern human behavior, and these laws are written on our hearts.
- You are created in the image of a creative, spiritual, communicative, intelligent, relational, and moral God.

Passage: Verse in Context — Genesis 1:24–28, 31

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Questions for Reflection and Application

- Why did God make you in his image?
- What are some of your creative qualities? Relational qualities? How do these reflect the image of God?
- Do you think of yourself as a spiritual being? How are you strengthening that aspect of you?
- When are you most effective at communicating? Verbally or in writing? One-on-one or in a large group? Through music? Through visual arts? Do you leverage your communication strengths when you communicate with God?
- Do other people see you reflecting God’s image? What are some things you can do to make that happen more often?

Father, thank you for making me a quality creation by bestowing upon me your qualities. Amen.