

From the makers of WAR ROOM, OVERCOMER and COURAGEOUS



THE FORGE

FIVE-SESSION **BIBLE STUDY** WITH VIDEO ACCESS
STEPHEN KENDRICK AND ALEX KENDRICK
DEVELOPED WITH **NIC ALLEN**



FOR

BIBLE STUDY

STEPHEN KENDRICK AND ALEX KENDRICK

DEVELOPED WITH NIC ALLEN

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CONTENTS

About the Authors	4
About the Movie	5
Introduction	7
How to Use This Study	9

SESSION 1

Seeing Like Jesus	10
-----------------------------	----

SESSION 2

Giving Like Jesus	20
-----------------------------	----

SESSION 3

Leading Like Jesus	30
------------------------------	----

SESSION 4

Investing Like Jesus	40
--------------------------------	----

SESSION 5

Sending Like Jesus	50
------------------------------	----

FROM THE KENDRICK BROTHERS • CREATORS OF WAR ROOM, OVERCOMER AND COURAGEOUS



CAMERON
ARNETT



PRISCILLA
SHIRER



KAREN
ABERCROMBIE



AND INTRODUCING
ASPEN
KENNEDY

THE FORGE

WHOEVER WANTS THE NEXT GENERATION THE MOST WILL GET THEM



AFFIRM FILMS, ANTIKATAPSE FILMS, PRODUCTIONS BY KENDRICK BROTHERS, "THE FORGE" BY BENEDETTA WILLOWAY, ANNA REIDON, JACK LEFFEN, "WARD'S A SHAW" BY ALEX KENDRICK, HILL ELLI, "GOD IN 2020" BY SHAWN RIGBY, LARRY FRENZEL, KEVIN BOUREN, SHARON KENDRICK, JIM McBRIDE, JUSTIN TALLEY, ANDREW BURNS, STEVE REYNOLDS, STEPHEN KENDRICK, ALEX KENDRICK & STEPHEN KENDRICK, ALEX KENDRICK



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ABOUT THE MOVIE

Isaiah Wright has some growing up to do. A year out of high school with no plans for his future, Isaiah is challenged by his single mom and a successful businessman to start charting a better course for his life. Through the prayers of his mother and biblical discipleship from his new mentor, Isaiah begins to discover that God's purpose for his life is so much more than he could hope for or imagine. From the Kendrick brothers, the creators of the number one hit *War Room*, comes *The Forge*, a faith-filled movie with old friends and inspiring twists.

IN THEATERS AUGUST 2024

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ALEX KENDRICK is an accomplished author, actor, and film director, whose credits include *Facing the Giants*, *Fireproof*, *Courageous*, *War Room*, *Overcomer*, and most recently, *The Forge*. A creative artist with a pastor's heart, Alex speaks internationally on the power of film and the surpassing power of Christ. He and his wife, Christina, have six children.

STEPHEN KENDRICK is a writer, speaker, and film producer with a passion for sharing the truth and love of Jesus among the nations. He produces the Kendrick Brothers' films and has cowritten (with Alex) the New York Times bestsellers *The Love Dare*, *The Resolution for Men*, and *The Battle Plan for Prayer*. Stephen is a frequent speaker on marriage, fatherhood, discipleship, and prayer. He and his wife, Jill, have six children.

NIC ALLEN (Bible study developer) currently serves as the campus pastor of Rolling Hills Community Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He completed his undergraduate work in communications at Appalachian State University, and he holds a master's degree in Christian education from Dallas Baptist University. His heart is to see God's Word come alive in people as they mature in faith and make a difference in the world. He and his wife of over twenty years, Susan, are blessed by two daughters and a son.

INTRODUCTION

What's your favorite book or film series? How about your favorite long-running TV show? Chances are, you connect with at least one character and his or her narrative arc. The best stories offer multiple opportunities to understand various characters and their development. *The Forge* is no exception.

Are you caught in the ever-shifting current of worldly culture with little to no regard for the perfect plan God has for you? Are you an *Isaiah*?

Are you like the earnest parent, channeling every ounce of hope you have into someone you love, eagerly waiting for them to catch a glimpse of the gospel? Are you a *Cynthia*?

Are you the seasoned believer who feels called to leverage your life, including your pain, to invest in someone else's journey? Are you a *Joshua Moore*?

It's quite possible you relate to parts of all of these characters. While the details of Cynthia, the dedicated single mom, and Isaiah, her wayward son, may not be specific to your story, there is an element of care within their little family we can all connect with. While the specifics of the route Mr. Moore took to develop a discipleship community may be different from anything you've experienced, there are important aspects of his leadership that the church has in short supply.

The call to be disciples and to make disciples is the central theme of *The Forge* and this coordinating study. During the five weeks of group gatherings, you'll examine the teachings of Jesus and applications within the early church to build a framework for discipleship. Each session includes a film clip as an on-ramp to study Scripture and examine a specific concept. Accompanying each week of group Bible study are three devotional opportunities for you to continue growing through personal study. Along the way, you'll be challenged to look back at how you have been forged as a disciple, seek new ways to grow, and look forward to making a significant discipleship investment in others in the future.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

The Forge Bible Study provides five lessons that can be used for group or personal Bible study. Each lesson contains four elements: Start, Discuss, Engage, and three days of Personal Study. Allow forty-five to sixty minutes for the group sessions.

START. Each study begins with opening discussion questions to introduce the topic and get conversation going. This section sets the tone and frames the conversation.

DISCUSS. This section begins by watching a short clip from *The Forge*, and is followed by a few discussion questions to process the clips and how they apply to our discipleship.

Codes to access five clips from *The Forge* are included with your purchase of this book and can be found on the insert located at the back of this book.

Slow or unreliable internet connection? Your Bible study videos can be downloaded to your device so you can play them offline. Simply download your videos on the Lifeway OnDemand App when you are in a place with strong internet connection. Then, you'll be able to watch your session videos anywhere, any time. Look for the download symbol beside your video.

ENGAGE. This section is the primary focus of each week. Leaders should facilitate the majority of the group session using the verses and questions provided in this section.

PERSONAL STUDY. After attending the group session, members should complete the three days of personal study at home before the next group session. Through this personal study, group members will explore biblical content and application that support the concepts introduced in the movie clips and group discussion.

As you complete the study, you'll be asked to list and pray for others in your life who might benefit from the material, and you'll be encouraged to consider inviting those people God put on your heart to join you in this study. Living life in the gospel means inviting others to know Jesus and find life in Him as well.

SESSION 1

SEEING
LIKE
JESUS

“Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

MATTHEW 9:13

START

► **Get to know your group by finishing this sentence:**

*If I could sit down and have a conversation with my younger self,
I would want to make sure that he or she knew _____.*

How we answer that question can teach us a lot about ourselves. Hindsight is certainly 20/20. At times, we all wish we could go back and tell ourselves what we know now—share words of warning and instruction, or perhaps even encouragement and hope. In some ways, the mentors in our lives are messages from the future. What they share with and speak over us are lessons they’ve learned and things they likely would have wanted to know and hear when they were in our shoes.

Knowing people further along in life’s journey who will share the wisdom of their experience matters. As you continue in this study, you’ll be asked to note those people and types of relationships in your life and recall those who have mentored you. You’ll be asked to lean into those who are or could be currently mentoring you and asked to consider who you might be able to mentor. Investing in others is like having life-giving conversations with your younger self, as you offer help to someone who is now where you once were.

► **Pray and ask God to speak clearly in your time together.**



► **WATCH** the clip with your group to continue the discussion.

Reluctantly and irresponsibly looking for a job, Isaiah ventured into Moore Fitness to complete an application. When a chance encounter put him face-to-face with the president of the company, he assumed that his attitude and demeanor had closed the door, only to have the hand of friendship extended instead. Over lunch, Moore asked the young man where he would like to be in five years, followed by three key questions. Mr. Moore offered Isaiah the chance to think about his answers and come back when he was ready to talk again. Isaiah returned with modest answers and encountered another surprise from Mr. Moore.

DISCUSS

► **TALK** about this week's scene from *The Forge* for a few minutes.

Briefly describe Isaiah and his approach to life.

What differences do you notice between Isaiah and Mr. Moore?

Why might Mr. Moore, a successful and busy corporate leader, spend his time on a young man like Isaiah, whom he'd never met?

ENGAGE

► **READ Matthew 9:9-13.**

Matthew and Jesus were an unlikely pair. Tax collectors were hated in the first century. Jesus's kindness and invitation to Matthew would've been totally unexpected.

Why is it so significant that Jesus would interact with Matthew and call him to be His disciple?

Share about a moment when someone saw past your sin or your circumstance and still valued and invested in you.

Consider Mr. Moore's three questions from the perspective of your younger self. How would you answer those questions from your vantage point today?

In what ways do you want to grow in this next year?

What kind of person do you want to be right now?

What do you want people to think when they see you?

Perhaps the answers to those forward-thinking questions are the same today as when you were young. Maybe they are different. Perhaps you see the way those young adult answers came to fruition in your life or how they needed to change over time so you could develop into who you are today.

This week, in your personal study, you will be invited to see people the way that Jesus does, looking past sin toward possibility. As you move forward, ask God to help the members of your group truly see Him and to help you see and respond to others the way Jesus does.

► **PRAY to close your time together.**

WEEK 1 • DAY 1

HOLD THE WHEEL

- **Begin today's study by reading the following verse from Psalm 119 and engaging with the subsequent prayer prompt.**

OPEN MY EYES THAT I MAY SEE
WONDERFUL THINGS IN YOUR LAW.

PSALM 119:18 NIV

*Lord, open my eyes, that I may see the truth of Your Word.
Open my mind, that I may eagerly seek to know You more.
Open my heart, that I may grow in love toward You and others.
Guide my hands and feet, that I may follow Your way.*

God's Word and prayer are the most helpful spiritual tools we have to align our hearts with God. The psalms allow us to combine these two pursuits in one place. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible and is all about the work of the Lord through the Scriptures. These tools are both featured in *The Forge*.

Prayer aligns our lives with the will of God, allowing us to see Him for who He truly is and see ourselves for all we can be in Christ. Did you see the film *War Room*? In some ways, *The Forge* is a sequel to that film. The character Cynthia, played by Priscilla Shirer, is the identical twin of Elizabeth, the character she portrayed in *War Room*. Elizabeth even makes it into *The Forge* to spend time with her sister. Further, Ms. Clara, played by Karen Abercrombie, is a significant character in both films. When learning of Cynthia's dilemma with her young adult son, Isaiah, Ms. Clara offers sage wisdom:

"We can't treat prayer like a spare tire that we only pull out in an emergency; it's the steering wheel that you hold tightly every day, no matter where you are going."

Do you tend to use prayer primarily for emergencies in life or to maintain daily connection to God? Recall and write about the last time you prayed in crisis.

Now, recall and write about the most significant season of prayer in your life, when you connected daily with God. How does God's delight in you prompt even greater delight in you for Him?

Read Psalm 73. Describe the psalmist's state of mind in verses 2-16.

What happened in verse 17 to change the psalmist's course?

Prayer ushers people into the presence of God. From that place, we can truly see the world for what it is, the enemy for what he is up to, and the Lord and what He has for us. Spend time praying today, asking God to reveal to you His presence, His power, and His purpose.

WEEK 1 • DAY 2
LET HIM SEE

- **Read this verse and pray that God would apply its truth to your life.**

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART,
FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD.

MATTHEW 5:8

- **Read 2 Kings 6:15-18. Then, answer the following questions.**

In 2 Kings 6, we see that Israel was at war with Aram during the days of the prophet Elisha.

What did Elisha pray when his young servant was overwhelmed by the size of Aram's army?

What did the servant see when his eyes were opened?

What did Elisha ask God for, regarding Aram's army?

It's no coincidence that Elisha asked God to make the servant see and to make the opposing army blind. The truth is, we need others to help us see what's around us and notice the ways God is fighting for us. In many ways, that's the role of a mentor or disciple-maker.

At any given point in our lives, if we are faithfully pursuing God, we are all either Elisha or the servant boy (or Paul or Timothy, for a New Testament example)—someone giving insight to others or someone gaining insight. You

are either the one being called and positioned to invest in others or the one on the receiving end of the investment.

If you have seen *The Forge*, you likely have a favorite character, even if it's not necessarily the one you identify with most.

► **Read the archetypes from the film below, and engage the questions that follow.**

- Isaiah before meeting Christ: the young person far from God
- Isaiah after meeting Christ: the new believer eager to grow in faith yet facing internal and external challenges
- Cynthia: the mom frustrated by, yet earnest for, the heart of her son
- Mr. Moore: the seasoned believer who has walked closely with Jesus—especially in seasons of pain—and now leverages his life and influence to help others follow Christ

Is there a particular person you resonate with most? Explain.

All of us need each of these people in our lives. Everyone needs a Mr. Moore to receive from and an Isaiah to pour into.

*When have you had a “Mr. Moore” make a difference in your life?
Perhaps someone is currently making a regular spiritual impact on you.
If so, describe that individual’s walk with Christ.*

What role does the Holy Spirit play in letting us see God?

► **Close in prayer, thanking God for all the ways others help you see Him more clearly.**

WEEK 1 • DAY 3

THOUGH NOT SEEING HIM

► **Read 1 Peter 1:1-9.**

Peter was more than a personal spiritual mentor in the life of the early church. Although he had close companions he disciplined personally, he also mentored the masses through his letters. Consider today the writings of theological giants like Charles Spurgeon or Timothy Keller and even living contemporaries like David Platt or Tony Evans. These and so many more have a wide reach when it comes to investing in others.

Peter's writings have spurred people closer to Jesus for over two thousand years. In this passage, the aging apostle wrote to dispersed, even exiled believers who had faced great challenges to their faith in Jesus.

Reflect on the depth of Peter's instructions. How do each of the lines below affirm or alter the ways a person sees God? Log your thoughts in the space provided.

"He has given us new birth" (v. 3).

"You are being guarded by God's power" (v. 5).

"You suffer grief in various trials" (v. 6).

What did Peter mean by saying his audience had not “seen” Jesus?

What did Peter explain a person receives and rejoices over, even without having seen Jesus (vv. 8-9)?

In your own words, what does it mean for a person to see Jesus without literally seeing Jesus?

How have you experienced this personally?

In a very real way, Peter saw the end of the story: He knew the difficulty early believers were facing and would continue to endure, and he saw a gloriously preferred future. Throughout the rest of his letter, we can see that he also knew what it would take for his readers to persist in faith. Each of the characters in *The Forge* walked through internal struggles and faced powerful external pressures. They needed the Word of God, timeless gospel truths, and the community of faith in order to see and follow Jesus. So do we.

► **Take a few minutes pray about who God might have you invest in.**

WHAT DID JESUS DO?

For the last three years of His earthly life, Jesus invested deeply in the lives of twelve men. He saw them, called them, taught them, and saved them, then sent them into the world to bear witness to what He had done for them. This five-week small group study uses featured clips from THE FORGE to ignite a passion for knowing Christ personally, following Him sacrificially, obeying Him willingly, and helping others become disciples of Christ. If Jesus focused His time and attention on walking with God and making disciples, shouldn't we?

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