GOD HELP ME BUT……

Life Group Leaders Guide

Theme: Open Hearts. Open Hands. Open Worship.

Main Scriptures: Acts 7:51–53; 1 Samuel 15:22–23; Acts 4:32–37; Acts 5:1–5; Acts 12:20–24.

Big Idea: We often ask God to change our circumstances without allowing Him to change us. Revival begins when we surrender our hearts, our possessions, and our desire for recognition to God.

ICEBREAKER

Opening Question:

Have you ever asked someone for advice or help, but deep down you already knew you weren't going to take their advice?

- Why do you think we sometimes ask for help but resist the answer?
- Have you ever realized that you were the one who needed to change rather than the situation around you?

Leader's Note:

Have fun with this question. Let people laugh and share experiences. Use it to introduce the central idea of the message:

"Sometimes our prayer is, God, help me! BUT don't change me!"

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1. OPEN HEARTS

"God, Help Me, BUT Don't Tell Me What to Do!"

Read Acts 7:51–53 and 1 Samuel 15:22–23.

Stephen confronted the religious leaders because they continually resisted the Holy Spirit. King Saul also struggled with obedience. Samuel reminded him that obedience is better than sacrifice and that stubbornness is like idolatry. The problem wasn't that God wasn't speaking. The problem was that people weren't willing to yield.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think it's sometimes easier to ask God to fix our circumstances than to ask Him to change our hearts?

Follow-up: Can you think of a situation where God may have been trying to change your response rather than change the situation?

2. What is the difference between having a strong personality and having a stubborn spirit?

Follow-up: How can we recognize when standing our ground has become resisting God's direction?

3. Why is it so difficult for us to receive correction from other people?

Follow-up: Who has permission to speak truth into your life, even when it's uncomfortable?

4. The message said, "Stubbornness is when my opinion becomes more important than God's instructions." What are some ways this can happen in our everyday lives?

Consider:

- Marriage and relationships.
- Parenting.
- Church involvement.
- Decisions about finances.
- Our attitudes toward forgiveness.

5. Have you ever had to humble yourself, admit you were wrong, and ask someone to forgive you? What did that experience teach you?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

An open heart is willing to say:

- I was wrong.
- I need to change.
- I need to forgive.
- I need to listen.
- I need to obey God even when I don't understand everything.

Leader Challenge:

Ask everyone to identify one area where they may be resisting God's direction.

It could be forgiveness, attitude, a relationship, a habit, or an area of obedience.

Personal Reflection:

What is one thing God may be asking you to change that you have been avoiding?

Key Truth: OPEN HEARTS – OPEN HEAVEN!

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2. OPEN HANDS

"God, Help Me, BUT Don't Ask Me to Give!"

Read Acts 4:32–37 and Acts 5:1–5.

The early church was marked by generosity. Believers understood that what they possessed was not just for their own benefit. Barnabas demonstrated this spirit by selling a field and bringing the proceeds to the apostles. In contrast, Ananias and Sapphira allowed dishonesty and the desire to appear generous to take control of their actions. Their issue wasn't simply keeping money. It was pretending to give everything while deliberately lying to the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think money and possessions can become such a difficult area for people to surrender to God?

Follow-up: What does our spending, saving, and giving reveal about what we value?

2. The message said, "What we refuse to release can become what we worship." What do you think that means?

Follow-up: Can something be a blessing in our lives but eventually become an idol?

3. Why do you think generosity was such an important part of the early church?

Follow-up: How does generosity help build unity and strengthen relationships within a church?

4. Is generosity only about money? What are some other ways we can live with open hands?

5. What keeps people from being generous? Is it fear, insecurity, selfishness, a lack of trust, or something else?

Follow-up: How can we learn to trust God with what He has placed in our hands?

6. Have you ever experienced the blessing of giving something away, helping someone, or serving someone without expecting anything in return? What happened?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Being generous means understanding that everything we have ultimately belongs to God.

Generosity isn't determined by how much money we have. It is demonstrated by how much of our heart belongs to God.

Leader Challenge:

Challenge everyone to find one practical way to demonstrate generosity this week.

Examples:

- Pay for someone's meal.
- Help a family with a practical need.
- Give toward a need in the church.
- Volunteer to serve someone.
- Give someone your time and attention.

Personal Reflection:

Am I holding onto something that God wants me to use to bless someone else?

Key Truth: OPEN HANDS – OPEN HEAVEN!

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3. OPEN WORSHIP

"God, Help Me, BUT Make Sure I Get the Glory!"

Read Acts 12:20–24.

Herod accepted the praise and worship of the people rather than giving glory to God. He wanted the recognition and attention that belonged to the Lord. The message reminds us that God doesn't give us gifts, talents, and opportunities so we can build our own name. He gives them so Jesus can be glorified through our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think people naturally desire recognition and appreciation? When does that desire become unhealthy?

Follow-up: Is there a difference between being thankful for encouragement and needing constant recognition?

2. Have you ever struggled with jealousy when someone else received recognition, an opportunity, or a blessing that you wanted?

Follow-up: What does that reveal about our hearts?

3. The message said, "The moment you need God's glory to make your name great, you've forgotten whose glory it is." What does this statement mean to you?

4. How can we tell when serving God has become more about our reputation than about helping others?

Consider:

- Wanting a position instead of wanting to serve.
- Becoming offended when overlooked.
- Comparing our ministry to someone else's.
- Wanting credit for everything we do.
- Being unwilling to serve when nobody notices.

5. What are some practical ways we can make sure Jesus gets the glory in our everyday lives?

Follow-up: How can we respond when someone compliments us or recognizes something we've done?

6. Paul and Silas worshiped God while sitting in prison. How can we develop a lifestyle of worship that isn't dependent on our circumstances?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Open worship means:

- Serving without needing recognition.
- Celebrating when others are blessed.
- Giving God credit for our successes.
- Remaining faithful when nobody is watching.
- Making Jesus the center of everything we do.

Leader Challenge:

This week, do something meaningful for someone without telling anyone about it or expecting recognition.

Look for opportunities to make Jesus known rather than making yourself known.

Personal Reflection:

Am I more concerned about being noticed by people or being pleasing to God?

Key Truth: OPEN WORSHIP – OPEN HEAVEN!

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5. GROUP DISCUSSION: WHICH "BUT" IS YOURS?

Bring the three main points together.

The message challenged us to examine three statements:

1. God, help me, BUT don't tell me what to do.
2. God, help me, BUT don't ask me to give.
3. God, help me, BUT make sure I get the glory.

FINAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Of these three statements, which one do you think is the greatest struggle for Christians today? Why?

2. Which of the three "BUTS" are you personally most likely to struggle with?

3. What would your family, friends, or coworkers notice if you began living with a more open heart, open hands, and open worship?

4. What do you think would happen in our church if every person genuinely practiced these three principles?

5. What is one specific change you need to make this week because of this message?

THIS WEEK'S LIFE GROUP CHALLENGE

Encourage everyone to complete these three actions before the next Life Group meeting:

1. **Open Heart:** Make things right with someone or receive correction in an area where you need to change.
2. **Open Hands:** Find someone you can bless through generosity, giving, or serving.
3. **Open Worship:** Do something for God without seeking recognition or attention.