

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

Session 1 – From “Have To” to “Want To”

Psalm 119:1–16

SESSION PURPOSE

This session helps participants explore why following God can sometimes feel like obligation rather than desire. Using Psalm 119 and supporting Scriptures, participants will see that God’s goal is not forced obedience, but transformed desire. The session invites honest reflection, introduces spiritual formation as a process, and reframes obedience as something that grows into joy over time.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Identify the difference between external obedience and internal desire
 - Understand spiritual growth as a process of formation, not instant change
 - Recognize the role of honesty and struggle in spiritual maturity
 - Explain how Scripture shapes the heart over time
 - Reflect on how obedience can move from obligation to delight
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KEY PASSAGES

- Psalm 119:1–16
 - Psalm 1:1–3
 - Matthew 7:24–27
 - Romans 7:15–25
 - Philippians 1:6; 2:12–13
 - John 15:9–11
 - 1 John 5:3
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SESSION LENGTH

60–75 minutes (adaptable for personal study or group settings)



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible (print or digital)
 - Participant study guide or journal
 - Pen
 - Quiet, comfortable space for discussion and reflection
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SESSION FLOW

1. WELCOME & OPENING (5 minutes)

Facilitator Guidance:

Welcome participants and set a tone of honesty and grace. Emphasize that this session is not about guilt or pressure, but about understanding how God shapes the heart over time.

Opening Thought:

Many people believe obedience to God matters—but obedience doesn't always feel joyful. Sometimes it feels like something we *should* do rather than something we *want* to do.

Opening Question (optional):

When you think about following God right now, does it feel more like obligation or desire?

2. WHEN OBEDIENCE FEELS LIKE OBLIGATION (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

Introduce the idea that spiritual practices—reading Scripture, prayer, obedience—can feel burdensome when the heart is divided.

Read Scripture: Psalm 119:1–3

Key Insight:

The problem is not that God's Word is burdensome; the problem is that our desires are often divided.

Facilitator Notes:

Allow participants to name their experience honestly. Avoid correcting or fixing. This honesty sets the foundation for formation.

Discussion Question:

What makes following God feel difficult or heavy at times?

3. MOVEMENT 1 – THE PATH OF WHOLENESS (10 minutes)



Teaching Focus:

Scripture describes faith as a *walk*—a direction over time, not a single decision.

Read Scripture:

- Psalm 119:1
- Psalm 1:1–3
- Matthew 7:24–27

Key Truths to Emphasize:

- Spiritual growth is gradual
- Stability is built through repeated alignment with God’s Word
- Faith is about direction, not perfection

Reflection Questions:

- Where do you see evidence of spiritual growth over time in your life?
 - Where do you feel unstable or inconsistent right now?
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4. MOVEMENT 2 – HONEST LONGING & INTERNAL CONFLICT (10 minutes)**Teaching Focus:**

Spiritual maturity includes telling the truth about the struggle between desire and action.

Read Scripture:

- Psalm 119:4–8
- Romans 7:15–25
- Philippians 1:6

Key Insight:

Formation begins with honesty. God continues the work He has started, but we must bring our real selves before Him.

Facilitator Tip:

Normalize struggle. Reassure participants that conflict does not mean failure—it means growth is happening.

Discussion Questions:

- Where do you feel a gap between what you know is right and how you live?
- What tends to keep that gap in place?



5. MOVEMENT 3 – FORMATION REQUIRES PARTICIPATION (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

God forms us, but we participate by consistently engaging His Word.

Read Scripture:

- Psalm 119:9–11
- Philippians 2:12–13
- Joshua 1:8
- Psalm 1:2

Key Emphasis:

This is not “try harder” or “do nothing.” It is cooperation.

Facilitator Insight:

Meditation is slow, repeated engagement—not rushing through Scripture.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you currently engage Scripture (frequency and depth)?
- What would it look like to return to God’s Word throughout the day?

6. MOVEMENT 4 – WHEN OBEDIENCE BECOMES DESIRE (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

Over time, obedience can move from discipline into delight.

Read Scripture:

- Psalm 119:12–16
- John 15:9–11
- 1 John 5:3

Key Truth:

God’s goal is not just changed behavior, but changed affection.

Illustration to Use:

Many disciplines (learning, fitness, music) feel difficult at first, then natural, and eventually enjoyable. Spiritual formation works the same way.

Discussion Questions:



- Where have you seen discipline turn into joy in other areas of life?
 - What would it look like for your relationship with God to move in that direction?
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7. SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHT (5 minutes)

Key Insight to Emphasize:

God does not simply ask you to follow Him—He forms you into someone who *wants* to.

Key Takeaway:

The Christian life is not about forcing obedience. It is about being shaped over time as God reshapes what we desire.

8. FINAL REFLECTION & PRACTICE (5 minutes)

Final Reflection Question:

What is one area of your life where God may be inviting you to move from “have to” into “want to”?

Practice for the Week:

Encourage participants to:

- Set aside 10–15 minutes daily
- Read Psalm 119:1–16 slowly
- Reflect honestly
- Choose one verse to return to throughout the day

Closing Prayer (Facilitator-Led):

Pray for honesty, patience with the process of formation, and a growing desire for God’s Word.

FACILITATOR REMINDER

Create a safe, pressure-free environment. This session invites vulnerability. Growth happens best where honesty is welcomed and grace is practiced.

