

## Resource List for Grace Groups

### Knowing Jesus:

#### Level (1)

**Who is this Man?** by John Ortberg (Book, DVD & Study Guide)

Jesus' influence has swept over history bringing inspiration to what has happened in art, science, government, medicine, and education; he has taught humans about dignity, compassion, forgiveness, and hope. Rediscover Jesus again in this book.

#### Level (2)

**Mere Christianity** by C.S. Lewis (Book, 8 session DVD and study guide)

In the classic *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis, the most important writer of the 20th century, explores the common ground upon which all of those of Christian faith stand together. This book provides an unequalled opportunity for believers and nonbelievers alike to read this powerful apologetic for the Christian faith. The DVD and study guide explore the history, meaning and relevance of this great book.

#### Level (3)

**Loving Jesus** by Mark Alan Powell (Book)

The essence of spirituality is loving God. Can we learn to love God? In this biblical spirituality for today, readers are encouraged to harbor a steadier flame and deeper commitment. Living at the poetic heart of faith entails seeing the coordinates of religious life in a new way. Drawing on his wide knowledge of the Bible and Christian tradition, as well as insights from his own journey, Powell shows how simple religious practices move us beyond the old certitudes of a naïve and youthful faith into the less certain but more bracing terrain of a second naïveté, a closer walk with Jesus.

**The Secret Message of Jesus** by Brian McLaren (Book)

Meet a Jesus who may be altogether new to you and discover afresh the transforming message of Jesus—an open invitation to radical change, an enlightening revelation that exposes sham and ignites hope, an epic story that is good news for everyone, whatever their gender, race, class, politics, or religion.

## **Prayer:**

### **Level (1)**

**Listen, Praying in a Noisy World** by Rueben P. Job (6 part DVD with leader guide, personal journals optional) Listen is a forty day prayer journey that guides both individuals and groups in learning how to listen for, understand and follow God's guidance and direction

**Praying for Strangers: An Adventure of the Human Spirit** by River Jordan (Book)

A story of an amazing personal journey of uncovering the needs of the human heart as the author prayed her way through the year for people she had never met before. The discovery that Jordan made along the journey was not simply that her prayers touched the lives of these strangers, but that the unexpected connections she made with other people would be a profound experience that would change her life forever.

### **Level (2)**

**Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?** by Phillip Yancey (Book and Study Guide)

This book will help you explore the intimate place where God and humans meet in Prayer. Polls reveal that 90 percent of people pray. Yet prayer, which should be the most nourishing and uplifting time of the believer's day, can also be frustrating, confusing, and fraught with mystery. Yancey tackles the tough questions about prayer and in the process comes up with a fresh new approach to this timeless topic.

### **Level (3)**

**Hearing God** by Dallas Willard (Book)

Being close to God means communicating with him--telling him what is on our hearts in prayer and hearing and understanding what He is saying to us. It is this second half of our conversation with God that is so important but that can also be so difficult. Gain rich spiritual insight into how we can hear God's voice clearly and develop an intimate partnership with Him in the work of His kingdom.

## **The Bible:**

### **Level (1)**

**No Experience Necessary, No Fail, New Testament Bible Study** (Study Bible)

As a Grace Group, read a section/chapter of Scripture several times: Ask these questions: What makes us angry about this text? What makes us excited about this text? What do we find really resisting in the text? What was Jesus (or the writer) really talking about when He said that? What was the world situation at the time Jesus (or the writer) said this? Reread the section of Scripture again and again as you wrestle with the questions. Using this simple method of Bible study as a group will yield a thoughtful, insightful, and faith filled discussion every time.

**Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today** by Adam Hamilton (Book, 6 part DVD and leader Guide available) Did Jesus really teach that everyone who is not a Christian will be assigned to hell? Why would Paul command women to “keep silent in the church?” Were Adam and Eve real people? Is the book of Revelation really about the end times? Who decided which books made it into the scriptures and why? Is the Bible ever wrong? In approachable and inviting language, Hamilton addresses these often misunderstood biblical themes leading readers to a deeper appreciation of the Bible so that we might hear God speak through it and find its words to be life-changing and life-giving.

**Cast of Characters: Common People in the Hands of an Uncommon God** by Max Lucado (Book)  
The stories of the people of the Bible are marked by scandal, stumble, and intrigue. We find our stories in theirs. We find our hope where they found theirs, in the hands of an uncommon God. If God can find a place for them ... He might just have a place for us too.

#### **Level (2)**

**Eat This Book, A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading** by Eugene Peterson (Book and Study Guide) Be challenged to read the Scriptures on their own terms, as God’s revelation, and to live them as we read them. With warmth and wisdom Peterson offers greatly needed, down-to-earth counsel on spiritual reading. He draws readers into a fascinating conversation on the nature of language, the ancient practice of lectio divina, and the role of Scripture translations; included here is the “inside story” behind Peterson’s own popular Bible translation, The Message.

## **Living Generously with Gratitude:**

#### **Level (1)**

**1000 Gifts A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are** by Ann Voskamp (Book, study guide and DVD)  
This study invites you to engage with truths that will serve up the depths of God’s joy and transform your life by embracing a lifestyle of radical gratitude.

#### **Level (2)**

**Giving to God** by Mark Alan Powell (Book)

We all know that everything we have is a gift from God. But sometimes it’s hard to know just how to give back to God. How much is enough? What does the Bible really say? What should giving look like in our everyday lives? Filled with good news for followers of Jesus, Mark Allan Powell’s Giving to God shows Christians the way to a better life and a better relationship with their money — and with God.

**The Hole in the Gospel** by Richard Stearns (Book, Study Guide and DVD)

This is the compelling true story of a corporate CEO who set aside worldly success for something far more significant, and discovered the full power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to change his own life. He uses his journey to demonstrate how the gospel—the whole gospel—was always meant to be a world changing social revolution, a revolution that begins with us.

**Making Room, Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition** by Christine Pohl (Book and Study Guide)

Making Room provides a variety of ways in which people can learn more about the practice of hospitality. The study guide is divided into nine lessons corresponding to the chapters of Making Room. Each lesson begins with an introduction briefly highlighting the main points of the book, followed by sections on group building, Scripture, discussion, reflection, and personal application. Each lesson also provides aids for groups and suggested activities to help participants begin to make the practice of hospitality part of their daily life.

## **Living the Resurrection:**

### **Level (1)**

**You'll Get Through This Hope and Help for Turbulent Times** by Max Lucado (DVD & Study Guide)

Using the Old Testament story of Joseph this series is for those seeking hope and help for turbulent times. This 6 session video based study offers assurance for anyone facing trials.

**The Question that Never Goes Away** by Philip Yancy (Book) Yancey addresses our cry of "Why, God" in three places stunned into silence by the calamities that have devastated them. At some point all of us will face challenges to our faith and Yancey offers the Biblical message of comfort and hope even when we don't understand and leads us to find faith when it is most severely put to the test.

**Forgiveness: finding Peace Through Letting Go** by Adam Hamilton (4 session DVD and leader Guide plus book) Bestselling author Adam Hamilton explores forgiveness in our relationship with God, with our spouses or romantic interests, with our parents and siblings, and with others in our lives.

### **Level (2)**

**Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice** by Dallas Willard (Book and Study Guide)

As Christians, we know that we are new creations in Jesus. So we try to act differently, hoping this will make us more like Him. But changing our outward behavior doesn't change our hearts. Only by God's grace can we be transformed internally. This shortened version of **Renovation of the Heart** has short readings and thought starters for individuals as well as for group discussion.

### **Level (3)**

**Life Together** by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Book)

Renowned Christian minister, professor, and author of *The Cost of Discipleship* recounts his unique fellowship in an underground seminary during the Nazi years in Germany. Giving practical advice on how life together in Christ can be sustained in families and groups. *Life Together* is bread for all who are hungry for the real life of Christian fellowship.

### **Naked Now** by Richard Rohr (Book)

For Christians seeking a way of thinking outside of strict dualities, this guide explores methods for letting go of division and living in the present. Drawn from the Gospels, Jesus, Paul, and the great Christian contemplatives, this examination reveals how many of the hidden truths of Christianity have been misunderstood or lost and how to read them with the eyes of the mystics rather than interpreting them through rational thought. Filled with sayings, stories, quotations, and appeals to the heart, specific methods for identifying dualistic thinking are presented with simple practices for stripping away ego and the fear of dwelling in the present.

### **Forgiveness** by William A. Meninger (Book)

The book explores the most complex but necessary component of spiritual life: forgiveness. Learn how to make this most difficult act part of your spiritual practice.

## **Faith & Doubt:**

### **Level (1)**

#### **A Case for Christ** by Lee Strobel (Book, movie available in Resource Library)

Is there credible evidence that Jesus of Nazareth really is the Son of God? Retracing his own spiritual journey from atheism to faith, Lee Strobel, former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, cross-examines a dozen experts with doctorates who are specialists in the areas of old manuscripts, textual criticism, and biblical studies. Strobel challenges them with questions about Jesus and the New Testament in a riveting quest for the truth about history's most compelling figure.

#### **A Case for Faith** by Lee Strobel (Book, movie available in Resource Library)

This book will deepen your convictions and give you fresh confidence in discussing Christianity with even your most skeptical friends. 'Everyone---seekers, doubters, fervent believers---benefits when Lee Strobel hits the road in search of answers, as he does again in The Case for Faith. In the course of his probing interviews, some of the toughest intellectual obstacles to faith fall away.

#### **A Case for a Creator** by Lee Strobel (Book, movie available in Resource Library)

More and more scientists, confronted with startling, cutting-edge evidence from many areas of research, no longer believe the universe just 'happened' or that life arose by mere chance. Behind a universe of staggering complexity, they are seeing signs of a Master Designer. Prepare to be astonished by what some of today's most respected experts have to say about creation. Could it be that the universe looks designed ... because it is?

### **Level (2)**

#### **Why Christian? For those on the Edge of Faith** by Douglas John Hall (Book)

In a passionate and personal way, Hall probes fundamental religious questions and wrestles with the cogency of basic Christian convictions about Jesus and God, about religious belief and the human predicament, about inauthentic forms of Christianity, about what is missing in human life today.

### **Level (3)**

#### **How (Not) to Speak of God by Peter Rollins (Book)**

With sensitivity to the Christian tradition and a rich understanding of postmodern thought, Peter Rollins argues that the movement known as the “emerging church” offers a singular, unprecedented message of transformation that has the potential to revolutionize the theological and moral architecture of Western Christianity. *How (not) to Speak of God* sets out to explore the theory and praxis of this contemporary expression of faith. Rollins offers a clear exploration of this embryonic movement and provides key resources for those involved in communities that are conversant with, and seeking to minister effectively to, the needs of a postmodern world.

## **Christian Living:**

### **Level (1)**

#### **Beyond Forgiveness by Phil Cousineau (Book)**

*Beyond Forgiveness* shows how acts of atonement—making amends, providing restitution, restoring balance—can relieve us of the pain of the past and give us a hopeful future. This rich and powerful book includes 15 thoughtful reflections on atonement by high-profile thinkers and activists encouraging readers to heal the past, make amends and restore balance in their lives and in our world.

### **Level (2)**

#### **Spiritual Formation by Henri Nouwen (Book)**

Henri Nouwen was one of the great spiritual masters of the modern age. His beloved writings have helped millions understand that no matter where we are, God can meet us there. Read this brand-new compilation of his writings and conferences, and let Henri Nouwen accompany you—with his trademark wisdom, acuity, common sense, erudition and, most of all, compassion—and help you encounter God more fully in your daily life.” — James Martin, SJ, author of *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*

Led by the writing of beloved, bestselling author Henri Nouwen the authors of *Spiritual Direction*, write on how to live out the five classical stages of spiritual development.

#### **Falling Upward by Richard Rohr (Book)**

This book examines the tasks of the two halves of life to show that those who have fallen, failed, or “gone down” are the only ones who understand “up.” Most of us tend to think of the second half of life as largely about getting old, dealing with health issues, and letting go of life, but the whole thesis of this book is exactly the opposite. What looks like falling down can largely be experienced as “falling upward.” In fact, it is not a loss but somehow actually a gain, as we have all seen with elders who have come to their fullness. Rohrs explains why the second half of life can and should be full of spiritual richness and offers a new view of how spiritual growth happens.

#### **The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Book)**

One of the most important theologians of the twentieth century illuminates the relationship between ourselves and the teachings of Jesus. What did Jesus mean to say to us? What is His will for us today? Drawing on the Sermon on the Mount, Dietrich Bonhoeffer answers these timeless questions by providing formative understanding of grace.

## **For Women**

**50 Women Every Christian Should Know: Learning from the Heroines of the Faith** by Michelle DeRusha (Book and Study Guide) Throughout history, countless women have boldly stepped out in faith and courage, leaving their indelible mark on those around them and on the kingdom of God. In lively prose Michelle DeRusha tells their stories, bringing into focus fifty incredible heroines of the faith. From Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, and Anne Hutchison to Susanna Wesley, Harriet Tubman, and Corrie ten Boom, women both famous and admirable live again under DeRusha's expert pen. These engaging narratives are a potent reminder to readers that we are not alone, the battles we face today are not new, and God is always with us in the midst of the struggle.

**A Woman Who Trusts God, Finding the Peace You Long For** by Debbie Alsdorf (Book, Study Guide Included) Our lives are filled with in-between times, those times when we are not quite where we would like to be (or where we thought we'd be). Dreams are on hold, prayers seem unanswered, and life can feel hard. And just when we think we have it all together, life happens again! During these times it can be difficult to see God in our situations and trust him with the future. With empathy and wit, Alsdorf uses the book of Philippians to encourage women to lean on God, to live one day at a time, to rejoice and not to worry, and to give thanks to God in all circumstances of life. The confidence and peace readers will gain from the perspective presented in this loving book will help them live fully in the moment, in every season of life.

**12 Women of the Bible** by Lysa Terquest and friends (DVD and Study Guide) In this 12-session small group Bible study, Lysa TerKuerst, Elisa Morgan, Jeanne Stevens and other leaders look at the spiritual lessons learned from twelve biblical women and what they mean for your life today. You'll learn about the triumphs and failures of Mary Magdalene, Rebekah, Hannah, and nine other women, studying their lives and learning how to:

- Apply biblical lessons to their own modern-day struggles
- Live through their failures as well as successes
- Draw near to God in a world filled with trials
- Find lasting contentment
- Overcome rejection and insecurity and much more

Each of the 12 sessions focuses on one biblical character (Rebekah, Abigail, Hannah, Gomer, Leah, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Martha, The Woman at the Well, Mary the mother of Jesus, and The Syrophenecian Woman).

You'll also discover lessons from each of these women that will help you persevere through the circumstances you are facing today.

This Participant Guide features discussion questions, background information on each character, space to write down thoughts, a helpful Leader's Guide, and much more e)

## **For Men**

### **Quiet Strength** by Tony Dungy (Book and Study Guide)

Tony Dungy's words and example have intrigued millions of people, particularly following his victory in Super Bowl XLI, the first for an African American coach. How is it possible for a coach—especially a football coach—to win the respect of his players and lead them to the Super Bowl without the screaming histrionics, the profanities, and the demand that the sport come before anything else? How is it possible for anyone to be successful without compromising faith and family? In this inspiring and reflective memoir, now updated with a new chapter, Coach Dungy tells the story of a life lived for God and family—and challenges us all to redefine our ideas of what it means to succeed.

### **Dare to be Uncommon** by Tony Dungy (Book, Study Guide, and DVD available)

In this 7 session series Tony Dungy shares core truths for every man to understand, live by, and pass on to others. 1) Strengthening Your Core 2) Loving Your Family 3) Lifting Your Friends and Others 4) Your Full Potential 5) A Mission That Matters 6) Influence Over Image 7) Live Your Faith.

## **For Families**

### **The 5 Love Languages** by Gary Chapman (A variety of study materials are available including books and DVD)

Any book in this series is highly recommended and helps individuals, parents or couples learn the five love languages, and discover their own unique love language so they can take practical steps to be truly loving and strengthen relationships in the home, family and workplace.