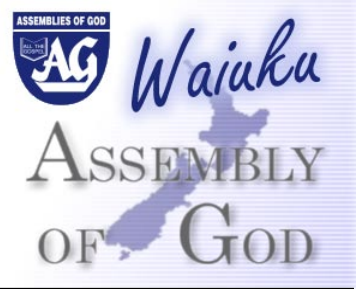


# Small Group Discussion Outline



THIS OUTLINE IS BASED ON A SERMON BY PETER WOODHAM  
(USED WITH PERMISSION)



**Read: Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**

Many people aspire to these great qualities and characteristics, they're great ideals - unfortunately, for many people they remain just that; ideals that are largely unattainable.

When people enter a relationship with God they agree to live according to His desires and commands and, consequently, reap the benefits of His blessing. Essentially Christians have made a commitment to live up to the 'ideals' we've just looked at. We need much more than just an *intention* to live up to these passages though - we need COMMITMENT.

Over time our good intentions tend to dissolve, therefore we need to harness the power to fulfil the things God has called us to.



1. **Discuss some 'good intentions' or plans you have made that have not been fulfilled.**
2. **Why do you think it's so hard to live up to our intentions?**

There are plenty of reasons why it's hard to live up to our intentions, even more when we look at why it's so hard to live up to our intentions to live by God's standards. The most basic of these is that "it's just too hard", and to be honest - yes, it is! Unless we rely on God's help.

We need some tools which will help us make a commitment to continue striving to live lives that honour God and are obedient to God, so let's look at some.

## **WE NEED TO KNOW GOD**

We will never be able to fully live up to God's standards if we don't know Him. Unless we really know God we cannot commit to Him.

Knowing God goes beyond knowing *about* Him, it's more than simply acknowledging that God *exists*, it's not even enough to have *begun* a relationship with Him - although all these things are essential.

Getting to know God is an active thing, it will not 'just happen' one day unless we accept the need to put in the effort and spend time reading the Bible, talking with Him, and listening to Him.

# The Power to Fulfil

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*"I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it."* **Philippians 3:10-11** (The MESSAGE Bible)

Just as in a human relationship, we develop our relationship with God by getting to know *about* Him, and by talking *with* Him. The Bible is dual-purpose in that in it we can see what God is like through the things He has done; it is also a method by which God can speak directly to us as we read His Word. Prayer is simply 'talking with God' and allowing Him to talk to you.



3. **Can you think of a time when God spoke to you through the Bible?**
4. **Do we always hear God correctly? (Yes/No)**
5. **How can we judge what we think we hear to be certain it's from God?**

## **WE NEED TO BE OBEDIENT**



**Read: 1 John 2:3-5; John 14:15; Jeremiah 7:23; Joel 2:11**

Being obedient is two-fold; first we need to stop doing the things that the Bible tells us God doesn't like - generally speaking this isn't where people get too caught up when they're trying to please God, secondly, we need to start doing the things that the Bible tells us God does like.

This also means seeking to discover the specific things God has planned for us to do, the purposes He created us for. How pleasing it must be for God when His children fulfil their purposes! We've all been given the same general purposes (Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry & Evangelism) but we've also been created for specific 'tasks' or roles and have been gifted in these areas.



6. **What are some ways we can discover these purposes for ourselves?**

Most often the way we discover the things God has planned for us is by getting involved in whatever we see that needs doing or that could be done. Being faithful in serving is often the catalyst through which God opens doors to His plans for us.

## **WE NEED TO HAVE FAITH**



**Read: Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 2:5; Hebrews 6:12**

Very basically, faith - in this context - means an acceptance in our hearts that God loves us, has plans for us and will protect us as we seek to follow His ways. This comes through knowing what the Bible says and by praying that God will give you the faith to embrace it.



7. **Can you think of other ways we can strengthen our faith?**

Harnessing these tools will give us the strength to be committed to God's ideals - no matter what. It is not easy at first, but when we develop a dynamic relationship with God and come to more fully realise His love for us then slowly these things become easier and easier...

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