

Compromise Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Are you a bargain hunter when you shop? Explain.
2. What's your ideal outdoor temperature?

Read the following passage: Luke 8:4-15.

One of Jesus' most distinctive teaching methods was the use of parables. Although the Old Testament employs a number of sayings and proverbial statements that involve a picture or comparison, Jesus took the art of the parable to a new level. This form of teaching was particularly strategic in Jesus' ministry for two reasons. Firstly, parables are very "sticky" forms of communication; they are memorable and impactful. And secondly, Jesus often used parables whose meaning was veiled just enough that those who wanted to condemn Jesus couldn't quite get enough material to bring him to trial.

In the case of this parable, of course, we have the meaning spelled out for us. Jesus is proclaiming the word of God — the good news of the kingdom — but the message is not bearing fruit in the lives of all who hear it. One of the primary reasons for this fruitlessness is compromise in the face of difficulty, distractions, and other desires.

Throughout this guide we are using the word "compromise" in the sense of making a moral compromise or compromising a commitment to the word of God. We are not speaking to the practical compromises that are healthy and an integral part of businesses, families, and human relationships in general.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Read Luke 8:13. Explain how difficulties, pressure, and challenging circumstances can lead to compromise. Have you experienced this in your own life? Explain.
2. Read Luke 8:14. Explain how distractions and the desire for other things can lead to compromise. What distractions or desires are most likely to tempt you to compromise wholehearted obedience to God's calling and purpose for your life?
3. In 1 Samuel 1 - 8, both Eli and Samuel allow their sons to operate in roles that they did not have the character to sustain. What are some ways leadership roles might put pressure on our character? What are some examples of difficult decisions leaders have to make? How do we develop strong character in our own lives?
4. Read 1 Samuel 15:1-31. How did Saul compromise? Why did he compromise? In general, why do you think it was so important for the king of Israel to follow God's instructions?

5. Sexual sin and forbidden relationships caused David great pain and led to disaster in Israel after Solomon's reign. What are some ways sexual sin can wreak havoc in our present context? Do you view pornography? What are some ways pornography can be harmful?
6. Read Luke 14:25-33. Why do you think Jesus makes such strong statements about being his disciple? What does it mean practically for us to count the cost of following Jesus? How might properly counting the cost on a daily basis help us to resist compromise?
7. Are there any areas of your life in which you feel that you are living in compromise? Explain. What is one change you can make this week?

Pray