

# I'VE GOT YOUR BACK

DISCUSSION GUIDE



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## **Session One: The Story**

1. When you think back to the story, what were some of your favorite parts? What intrigued you?
2. Which character in the story did you most identify with, and why?
3. In what ways did this story impact you or lead you to significant insights?
4. What was the most surprising insight you learned about the theology of leadership and followership?
5. In many places in the New Testament, Jesus said, "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 16:24, 19:21; Mark 1:17, 2:14, 8:34, 10:21; Luke 5:27, 9:23, 9:59, 14:27, 18:22; John 1:43, 10:27, 12:26, 21:19). What is the significance of Jesus' question? What does this phrase mean to you now?

## **Session Two: Your Story**

1. Who do you consider to be a great leader from history? Why is this person significant to you?
2. Who have been good role models of leadership in your life? What was it about them as a leader or as a person that made them effective?
3. When was a time when you experienced mistreatment from a leader that you would classify as follower abuse? How did this experience impact you?
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5. How does this passage relate to follower abuse? What would cause or allow leaders to act this way?
5. Do you tend to avoid or welcome opportunities to lead? To what degree is this related to bad leadership you have experienced in your lifetime?

## **Session Three: Failure and Transformation**

1. What are some examples of well-known fallen or corrupt leaders who have been in the news? What do you think was the root cause of their failure?
2. Why won't simply "trying harder" guarantee success in someone wanting to become a better leader?
3. Saul, the king of Israel, hurled his spear at David so hard that the spear stuck in the wall as David dodged it (1 Samuel 19:10). What character flaws cause good leaders who lead well for a while to gradually go bad?
4. In what way can redemption and sanctification by grace through faith in Jesus improve someone's ability to lead apart from any leadership training?
5. Where do you most need God to change you to become a better follower and leader?

## **Session Four: Types of Followership**

1. How would you explain the three types of leadership to someone who has not read the book?
2. In what way is this concept of Type I, Type II, and Type III followership helpful to you?
3. When have you observed a leader or follower confusing the three types of followership?
4. Consider the life of David. See, for example, 1 Samuel 16:19-23, 17:12-15, 17:32-37, 18:5-11, 24:1-7, and Acts 13:22. How would you rate his followership in each of these three types?
5. What Type III leader-follower relationship do you need to renegotiate, and why?

## **Session Five: Levels of Followership**

1. Name the roles in your life where you are following an individual or group. How would you rate your level of followership in each of those roles?
2. How would you describe the difference between level four and level five?
3. Why is level three less than ideal and under what circumstances might it be acceptable?
4. Who do you know who is a good example of following at level five? What does this person have that others lack? What specific behaviors demonstrate high-level followership?
5. Romans 12:8 says, "If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously." In what situation might God be challenging you to express more of a leadership role?

## **Session Six: REAL Followership**

1. Think of two very different people you know who represent a REAL follower. In what ways are they alike and in what ways are they different?
2. As you consider how well you follow others, which of the four aspects of being a REAL follower is most challenging to you currently?
3. Why is being responsible and taking responsibility so integral to good followership?
4. Joseph is a good example of REAL followership. How was he REAL when he served Potiphar (Genesis 39:1-6) and later the jailers in prison (Genesis 39:19-23)?
5. According to the apostle Paul, following exceptionally well, stepping up to take responsibility, being perfectly ethical and always being authentic and never fake, while failing to love others however, means you fall short. In 1 Corinthians 13:3, Paul talked about many excellent things he could be doing. Then he added, "But if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing." What does it mean to show love to those who lead us?

## **Session Seven: The Leader-Follower Dynamic**

1. When have you experienced the leader-follower dynamic occurring in an exceptionally effective way?
2. Why is this experience so fleeting and rare, in your opinion?
3. In what way can you see the leader-follower dynamic occurring in the story of Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:6-22)?
4. In what way can you see the leader-follower dynamic occurring in the story of David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:1-42)?
5. What specific actions can you take in one of your roles as a follower to help this dynamic to occur more often?

## **Session Eight: Your Followership and Leadership**

1. What are some of the real costs for attempting to follow well?
2. When you find yourself not following well, what is typically getting in your way, both externally and internally?
3. Leadership and followership have a “doing” side and a “being” side. What do you observe about these two components in Psalm 78:72?
4. As a follower, what do you most need to work on? As a leader, what do you want to do differently as you lead?
5. Paul describes Jesus as emptying himself and giving up rights to everything he had the right to hold onto (Philippians 2:3:8). What rights, perks, privileges, titles, or attitudes do you need to let go of to make yourself available as a leader? What would it mean for you to empty yourself so that you can be prepared to lead well?