



Completing Project Me

Small Group Discussion Guide

Lessons 1-12

Chapter and Session #1 - Completion is the Goal

Opening Round- Describe one thing you started but did not finish or one thing you started and finished well. How did your finishing or not finishing the task impact you?

A Quick Look- When God gets involved, he follows through and finishes what he starts. Note how he raised nations and lowered them through direct intervention throughout the Bible. Also, think about how the book of Revelation addresses completion. Finishing well matters. What stands out about God's finishing work in the world?

A Deep Dive- Read Psalm 37 prior to gathering. You will note four major motifs in this Psalm:

- Worry and fretting over bad things and people is common but not productive (vv. 1, 7–8).
- God will deal justly with things and people who concern you or intend you harm, so let him (vv. 2, 9–10, 14–15, 20, 33).
- God will bring about answers for those who love him, so expect them (vv. 3–6, 11, 28–29, 39–40).
- Don't take matters into your own hands. Let God deal with problems and complete you (vv. 7, 34).

Which of these motifs do you most need reminding?

Remember This- Philippians 1:6: "I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Now Do It- What needs fixing within yourself as you march toward completion? Pray that you will trust him to do what he promised: to complete his work in you. Look for progress and report back to the group.



Chapter and Session #2 - How Many Layers Are There?

Opening Round- Think of a person who you have never met but whose unintended act of kindness or generosity benefitted you.

A Quick Look- It is a mistake to assume there is only one outcome to every action. Truth be told, there are dozens if not thousands. This truth is core to the laws of unintended consequences and unexpected blessings.

A Deep Dive- Read Colossians 1:19–20. Jesus was given the fullness of God to do the full work of reconciliation in the world. Ephesians 1:22–23 lets us know that we (the church) have also been given fullness to live out what God wants us to do in the world right now. Exodus 12 is a reminder that God is able to meet our needs right now and the needs of others for years to come through a single act.

- If fullness (pleroma) means that God continues to do work in new ways and continues to work through old ways for years to come, how should I look at my decision-making process?
- When and where should we reasonably expect the layers to end?
- Considering that God did not reveal the implications of the Passover to Moses or to the people of Israel, what can we deduce about his restraint from revealing the implications of his work in our lives?

Remember This- A person who asks, “What difference did that make?” should revisit that question in ten years. The answer will be different after layers have formed.

Now Do It- What makes little sense in your life right now that might make sense someday if God continues to work in ways you do not know? Look for layers along the way and thank God when you see them unfold.



Chapter and Session #3 - Faith in God, Not in Resolution

Opening Round- Fast food, microwave cooking, self-checkout, online shopping, high-speed travel, and immediate callback features have all contributed to our expectation of quick resolve. Admit it: we have all felt the frustration of a checkout line that's three-person deep. Among the many things that are not quickly resolved, which one seems to bother you most?

A Quick Look- In CPM, it is noted that many people do not live by faith in God but by faith in results. To them, obedience to God is not an end in itself but a means to an end: "I will be obedient to God if the results I hope for are forthcoming. If not, my faith will suffer." Faith in God is trust that He wants what is best for us and will produce the right results.

A Deep Dive- In Hebrews 11, many Bible characters did not receive the results they were promised in their lifetimes (vv. 13, 39); however, the promises were eventually fulfilled. Can you think of other figures in the Bible who either did not receive what God promised them in their lifetime or received the promise later in life? Who are they? What did God do through them that outlasted them?

Verse 6 says that it is impossible to please God without faith. Hebrews 11 is full of examples of people whose faith was firmly in God and not in outcomes. How might that have impacted their faith development? What impact would that kind of faith have upon doubt?

Remember This- Everyone desires resolution, and that is a good impulse. We want it in relationships, life plans, goals, and stories. Everyone wants to know the ending of the movie or the book and whether it is happy or tragic. What is most important to know is that God will resolve all matters if we trust in Him. Then, we can have confidence in the ending before we even get there.

Now Do It- What do you want to happen most in your life right now or in the near future? Which is more important: that it happens regardless, or that God makes it happen? Pray accordingly.



Chapter and Session #4 - Walk in Light Rather Than Chase It

Opening Round- When have you chased after something without enjoying the experience of the moment?

A Quick Look- Chapter 4 reveals that walking in light is allowing the light to fill you and impact your present experience. Chasing light rarely leads to the desired outcome. Walking in light is walking in the love and truth of God.

A Deep Dive- Read John's initial words in his gospel and first letter, specifically John 1:1–9 and 1 John 1:1–7. What constitutes as "light" according to John in these two passages? The first words used in a letter or a story are often significant and included at the beginning with good reason. Why might John have begun both his gospel account of Jesus' life and his letter to the church with words about light? What does walking in light entail? What does walking in darkness entail? John was reportedly very close to Jesus even among the apostles. In what way would that contribute to his use of the expressions "living in light" and "walking in light"?

Remember This- People who chase light are following a possibility. People who walk in light are following a person, and that person has the power to transform us.

Now Do It- Walking in the light is the daily experience of seeking the company and comfort of the Spirit while doing God's will. What does that look like for you? What daily exercises would demonstrate that you are walking in the light? What activities contribute to walking in the light?



Chapter and Session #5 - Ripples, Threads, and Endless Impact

Opening Round- What have you said or done that had ripples of impact beyond your expectation? Who and how many benefitted from your act or statement?

A Quick Look- Jesus made statements and acted in ways that still impact the world today. Which statements have affected you most? Which acts have impacted you most?

A Deep Dive- Chapter 5 of CPM refers to many passages of Scripture that tell stories of one person's faithfulness that leads to the healing of nations, the redemption of people, and in Jesus' case, salvation for the world. The simple acts of Esther, Daniel, Joseph, Abraham, David, Mary, Paul, and others impacted scores of people for generations to come. Which person stands out to you as the best example of how ripples of faithfulness and threads of obedience lead to surprisingly big results? What was said or done that impacted so many? Why were their actions or words more impactful than the words or actions of others?

Remember This- Everything you say and do has consequences that are bigger than intended. They impact more people than you may expect. How might this change the way you process what you say and do?

Now Do It- Pray about what you can say or do that will outlast you. Plan how you will say or do it. Determine the best context in which it should be said or done.



Chapter and Session #6 - Time + Faith + Obedience = Answers

Opening Round- Recount a difficult time when it seemed as though you would never make it through and how you survived until you did.

A Quick Look- We measure time not only by clocks and calendars but also by how it affects us. It moves too slowly when we want it to pass. It moves too quickly when we want to preserve it. In reality, time consistently moves at the same pace even when it seems otherwise. Our faith in God puts time and results in His hands.

A Deep Dive- In Chapter 6 of CPM, it reads, “Faith and time have an interesting relationship. Time tells us that all good things come to an end. In fact, time tells us that everything comes to an end. Faith in God tells us that all good things will never come to an end. God is never done. Time reminds us that everything winds down and gets old. Faith reminds us that God makes all things new again (Revelation 21:5).” How does a deep sense of faith impact our view of time? How does doubt or anxiety impact our view of time?

Chapter 6 also reads, “Obedience, like its motivator—faith, has a relationship with time. Obedience does not allow time to have the final say. Time will not be the measure of obedience. In fact, obedience in its nature ignores time. It defers to God’s will and lets the chips of time fall where they may. Expedience allows time to dictate response.” Obedience does not have an expiration date. Whether we believe the time has passed for success or not, we cannot afford to stop doing what we are led to do until God makes it clear that obedience requires it.

Psalm 27 is a story about fighting, resting, trusting, preserving faith through difficulty, and letting God work for us when others fail us. At the end of all of the activity, the difficulties and the challenges, the best response is to wait for God. He will redeem time.

Remember This- Persistence and perseverance are not difficult for those who have faith that God always brings big answers to our big questions.

Now Do It- What have you been waiting to happen that remains incomplete? Considering that God is not limited by time, how will you wait while moving forward?



Chapter and Session #7 - The Least Expected Places

Opening Round- What have you lost and then found again? Where did you find it?

A Quick Look- God uses the most unlikely of people in the most unlikely of ways to achieve the most unbelievable results.

A Deep Dive- Chapter 7 of Completing Project ME is a chapter filled with examples of God using unlikely people in unusual ways to accomplish his intended results. One such example is when God used a small boy named David to defeat an ominous, giant warrior (Goliath). Other examples include a poor widow who demonstrated stewardship (Luke 21:1–4) and a Samaritan who taught the Jews what love for a neighbor was all about (Luke 10:25–37). All of these people were among the most unlikely to illustrate these principles. Turning to Gideon as an example, read Judges 6 and 7 and answer these questions:

- Why did Gideon test the Lord with fleece in Judges 6?
- Why did God reduce the fighting force on two occasions—from 32,000 to 10,000 (Judges 7:3) and then again to 300 (Judges 7:7)?
- For what underlying reasons did God use the least expected people to accomplish greatness? (Hint: He stated one reason in Judges 7:2.)
- Why would God have the people of Israel use props such as trumpets and pots to secure a victory?

Remember This- God is not using us in unexpected ways to make a point to the world; He uses us in unexpected ways to make a point to us. He wants us to be dependent upon Him—not independent from Him. He wants us to pray for wisdom and His aid and not rely upon our own confidence and ability.

Now Do It- Pray and ask God to reveal to you what you might do for him that you are unqualified. When you learn what that is, ask for wisdom, knowledge, power, and faith to step out and do it. It may seem daunting to you, but remember: this is God's way of working to draw glory to Himself, build faith in us, and bring help to others.



Chapter and Session #8 - Redemption, Restoration, and Recycling

Opening Round- What have you repurposed in your household for use in other ways? Some popular hacks include: using bread clips to organize electronics cords, putting a brush head on a power drill to clean sinks and tubs, and using an empty water bottle to separate the yoke from the egg whites.

A Quick Look- Redemption is buying something or someone back from the ash heap or worse. Restoration is reviving something or someone to their original purpose. Recycling is reusing our experiences in ways beyond the original purpose. God does all of these—redeem, restore, and recycle—with people of faith.

A Deep Dive- Chapter 8 of *CPM* underscores God's work of redeeming us when we are lost having become slaves to sin, restoring us to serve him as we were created to serve, and recycling our experiences to impact others in ways beyond our understanding. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26–2:5. The apostle Paul acknowledged that he and we are far from capable in the beginning. We are naturally unable to be and do what God wants us to be and do. How does he say that? However, that is not the end of our story. He acknowledged that Jesus does what must be done in and through us. That is reason for our boasting about Jesus. His own ministry was not built by his sufficiency but by God's power. After reading the verses above, answer the following:

- Why does God choose lowly things instead of great things?
- What happens when God redeems and restores the lowly things?
- What happens when we acknowledge that God is the one who has worked in and through us?

Remember This- If God can redeem you and restore you to live according to your original purpose, he can recycle your experiences to benefit others as they are redeemed and restored.

Now Do It- Think of experiences you have had that seemed to be wasted, ruined, or worthless. Pray that God will show you how he can redeem them and make them useful for your future growth, the growth of others around you, and for His kingdom. Further, look for opportunities, places, and people where God may use these same parts of your story and experiences to help others understand God's redemption and restoration.



Chapter and Session #9 - Looking Through and Beyond

Opening Round- Have you ever been looking at something near when the most interesting thing was beyond? What were you looking at? What was of greater significance in the distance?

A Quick Look- We live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith has its own set of eyes, and God helps the faithful see beyond the limitations of our physical sight. He gives us glimpses of what could be and what He can do.

A Deep Dive- To look at and near is the natural way of looking; it is our physical vision. To look through and beyond is not natural as it is faith vision. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16–12:8 then answer these questions:

- How many adversities did Paul face in this passage?
- What were the immediate physical, mental, emotional, and relational consequences of those adversities?
- Who was responsible for Paul's hardships?
- How did God change his understanding?
- What was his later boast or prayer after learning the lessons of the trials?

Remember This- Do not pray for God to remove obstacles until we pray that God reveal what can first be learned from those obstacles. Otherwise, we may miss an indispensable lesson and stunt our own growth.

Now Do It- Think about the most significant challenge, disappointment, or setback that you currently face. Ask God what lays beyond it. Ask God to reveal how the challenge, disappointment, or setback will lead to your growth and the growth of others. Celebrate that which you can only see with faith eyes before the results are revealed.



Chapter and Session #10 - Pray More and for More

Opening Round- Describe a time when you were in a conversation you badly wanted to end but could not.

A Quick Look- Productive prayer requires a relationship with God, a desire to communicate with Him, an interest in His will, and a willingness to obey Him.

A Deep Dive- Prayer should be primarily relational rather than situational. It should seek discovery about God and ourselves more than present requests for Him to answer. Psalm 23 is one of the most notable passages in the Bible. Though not a prayer per se, the Psalmist describes situations he found himself in with which most of us can relate. The prevailing focus in this passage is not about the difficult situations themselves but upon the person, presence, and provision of the Shepherd. Consider the following:

- Identify the meaning or significance of God as a Shepherd. Why is this a good picture of God in this context?
- Identify the kinds of movement that are mentioned, such as stillness (dwelling, abiding) and activity (guide, walk, paths). Why is stillness mentioned as well as walking or moving?
- Identify sources of potential distress. What are the difficulties in this passage?
- What are the primary benefits associated with being under the Shepherd's care?
- How might this kind of relationship impact the way you pray?

Remember This- When we pray more frequently, we tend to pray for more—beyond immediate concerns and needs. Faith, attitude, depth of relationship, and frequency of communication make all the difference between ineffective and effective prayer.

Now Do It- Consider speaking to God about every subject of thought throughout the day. Take note of any trends in topics about which you pray more often than others. Expand the conversation.



Chapter and Session #11 - Be Thankful for the Clear and Unclear

Opening Round- If you could isolate one event, person, and act of kindness for which you are most thankful, what would they be?

A Quick Look- Giving thanks is an activity that can be done by an unthankful person, and being thankful is an orientation that always leads to thanksgiving. Gratitude should be considered a virtue. Living with gratitude leads toward being thankful for things that most people might not consider praiseworthy or deserving of expressions of thanksgiving.

A Deep Dive- Gratitude is an expression or outcome of character more than a practiced exercise. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 and note the proximity of constant prayer, constant rejoicing, and constant thanksgiving. Why do they go hand in hand? Why would constant prayer be sandwiched in the middle of constant rejoicing and constant thanksgiving? Why might the apostle Paul suggest expanding the matters for which to be thankful in verse 18 beyond good things?

Read Colossians 2:6–7. How is gratitude connected to faith? Why might the word overflowing be used with thankfulness? What is the root that leads to overflowing thankfulness?

Remember This- The deeper the faith, the more prevalent the gratitude. Those who have deep faith in God will be thankful for the unclear as frequently as for the clear.

Now Do It- Stretch your expression of thanks to include your difficulties, lack of clarity, and struggles. Do this for one week and see how it impacts you and your faith. Share the results with your group.



Chapter and Session #12 - Expect More than Self-Fulfillment

Opening Round- What would you hope others might say about you at your funeral or memorial service?

A Quick Look- God not only wants to complete you to be the best version of yourself for your own sake but also because your purpose is much grander. In the process of completing you, God is working to complete others and carry out His will in them.

A Deep Dive- Read Philippians 1:3–6. The apostle Paul prayed for the Philippians with a spirit of love and gratitude but also with confidence. He was certain that the project God began would be completed in the people for whom he prayed. His confidence was based upon his personal experience as well as his knowledge of the thousands of years during which God successfully finished well what He started and fulfilled what He promised.

Read Philippians 3:12–20. Paul extended his confidence to include himself. In these verses, he offers a perspective of the ongoing refining process that God leads us through until we reach our final reward. His confidence was not foundationless. He had reasons to believe that completion was very likely for those who live by faith in God.

From everything you read in *Completing Project Me*, what gives you greater confidence that God will complete you? What might that completion include? Where is your greatest need for growth in your journey to completion?

Remember This- Your life's story will only be complete if it transcends your self-fulfillment. It must include a desire to do God's will and to contribute to the completion of others.

Now Do It- Take a hard look at your life, faith, and relationships. For what are you most thankful? For what are you seeking improvement? For what do you yearn most? Orient your prayer, expectations, goals, and efforts in that direction as you move forward and thank God for the progress.

