Small Group Guide: Growing in Childlike Greatness

Opening Prayer:

Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to guide the discussion.

Key Takeaways:

1. True greatness in God's kingdom starts with childlike humility and faith.

2. Growing in childlike greatness involves:

a) Increasing confidence in God's protection

b) Willingness to help others recover and return to faith

c) A growing tendency to forgive others

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon mentions "growing confidence in God's protection." How have you experienced God's protection in your life? How has this affected your faith?

2. Pastor Burgess talks about joining the "search party" for those who are straying. Have you ever helped someone return to faith? What was that experience like?

3. The sermon emphasizes forgiveness. Why do you think forgiveness is so crucial in our spiritual growth? What makes forgiveness challenging?

4. How does the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-35) challenge your perspective on forgiveness?

5. Pastor Burgess mentions that unforgiveness can lead to a loss of peace and intimacy with God. Have you experienced this in your own life? How did you overcome it?

6. The sermon talks about healing from past hurts and scars. How can we practically apply the "salve" of the Holy Spirit to our emotional wounds?

Practical Applications:

1. Self-reflection: Take time this week to examine your heart. Are there areas where you're struggling to forgive? Bring these to God in prayer.

2. Reach out: Think of someone you know who may be "straying" from their faith. Make an effort to connect with them this week – perhaps invite them for coffee or send an encouraging message.

3. Protection proclamation: Each day this week, verbally affirm God's protection over your life. Use Scriptures like Psalm 91 or Hebrews 13:5-6 to reinforce your confidence in God's care.

4. Forgiveness practice: If there's someone you need to forgive, take a step towards reconciliation. This might involve prayer, writing a letter (even if you don't send it), or having a conversation with the person.

5. Childlike faith challenge: Do something this week that requires you to trust God like a child. This could be stepping out in a new ministry, sharing your faith with someone, or letting go of a worry you've been carrying.

Closing Prayer:

Close the session by thanking God for His forgiveness, protection, and love. Ask for His help in growing in childlike greatness and faith.