



Loading Saying “No” to Me Discussion Guide

From the moment we ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we enter a process of becoming more like Jesus. This process demands sacrifice, self-examination, and commitment to follow through on our decision. It is no wonder that many people give up on the process in the middle of “loading.” But if you do, you don’t get to experience the full benefits of a relationship with God. This week, we focus on one of the most difficult parts of the loading process: learning to say “no” to ourselves.

Jump Start

Leader: This section is designed to get discussions started, examine God’s truth and apply it to our week. The Deeper is much longer this week, so please choose between Jump Start and Deeper.

1. What is the closest thing you have to a “guilty pleasure?” A food, TV show, or music style for example?
2. **Read [Mark 8:31-38](#)**. What does it mean to “take up your cross”? What did the cross represent at the time Jesus commanded this, compared to what it means today? When has your faith been unpopular or even unappreciated?
3. **Read [2 Corinthians 5:14-17](#)**. In what way does putting our faith and hope in Jesus make us new? Does this mean our personality changes? Our desires? Our passions or dreams? For those that are believers, have you experienced unexplainable changes in your life/heart/mind since giving your life to Christ?
4. **Read [Romans 7:15-23](#)**. Why is Paul publicly acknowledging his sin in an open letter to a church he is leading? What does Paul mean whenever he says, “And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good”? While you are in the “loading” (or sanctification) process, what are some of the ways you have combatted the sinful nature we all have?
5. **Read [Galatians 2:20](#)**. What does it mean to be “crucified with Christ”? How does Paul’s idea of, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ in me” differ from the way most Christians live? In what ways have you truly allowed God to take over your life? In what ways have you only allowed God to be along for the ride?

6. Final Thought: **Read [Hebrews 4:15](#)**. Was Jesus tempted in the Bible? When? If He was tempted, He was drawn to sin or considered sin. (The Bible doesn't say He was almost tempted or that Satan tried to tempt Him. It says Jesus was tempted.) How could Jesus also be God if He was drawn to sin? How do you need to change your approach towards temptation? Towards sin?

Deeper

Leader: This section is designed for further use in your Life Group or for personal study. These can also be used as discussion points and ways to stay connected with your group throughout the week.

This series is all about understanding the fact that we are all “loading.” We are all in the process of becoming who God called us to be. In the “Deeper” section of our Life Group material, we will be looking at characters in the Bible who stalled out or had a hiccup in the “loading” process. This week we look at Samson, whose entire life is recorded for us in Judges, chapters 13-16.

7. **Read [Judges 13:3-5](#) and [Judges 13:24-25](#)**. What were the requirements for Samson (and his parents)? Why were covenants like this one used so frequently in the Old Testament? What sort of “covenants” between us and the Lord do we use during the “loading” process?
8. **Read [Judges 14:1-9](#)**. What character traits/flaws do we see in Samson? What is the significance of verse 4 and 6?
9. After several altercations between Samson and the Philistines, we arrive at a giant showdown, the perfect place for God's power to again be seen through Samson. **Read [Judges 15:11-20](#)**. Where do we see Samson's character traits/shortcomings show up again? Why does God continue to choose to use him?
10. We now come to Samson's most infamous story: his relationship with Delilah. You can read the entire story starting in Judges 16:4 but let's fast forward to **[Judges 16:15-22](#)**. Why did God finally leave Samson? He had broken the covenant before this (eating unclean honey from the carcass of a lion and had unclean sexual relationships), and yet God still blessed him. What ultimately stalled Samson's “loading” progress? What distractions may be slowing your “loading” progress?
11. **Read [Judges 16:23-30](#)**. Do you feel Samson changed at the end of his life? Why or why not? When you feel you have messed up beyond repair, do you let it beat you down or do you let it change you for the better?