

## Welcome and Reminders

Welcome to any visitors and welcome back to the group members. It is important to remember that everything said and done in this group is confidential. The expectation is that there will not be discussion about our conversations to anyone outside of the group that is represented here and now. We understand that sometimes personal insights or information may be shared by someone who feels comfortable doing so in this group and not around others. Let's be respectful of that and carry our commitment to confidentiality as we leave this group. *(Pass out the confidentiality reminder to anyone who has not yet received one).*

## Prayer and Praises

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## Introduction

In Revelation 12 we read that Spiritual Warfare is won through the power of two distinct weapons – the first and foremost being the blood of the lamb (Jesus' sacrifice) and the second being the word of our testimonies. We often celebrate the sacrifice made so that our debt would be paid, but we forget about the power of the stories that God has written through each of us.

One of the most powerful things about a church fellowship is that each person is a walking breathing testimony or, maybe even more so, an ensemble of testimonies – of stories about who God is to each person, what God has done for each person, and what holy truths God has revealed to each person.

With this in mind, one of my goals for CARE groups this year was to see more individuals contribute to the authorship of CARE groups. So, here we are at the first CARE group of 2013 and I'm diving in... I would like to challenge each CARE group to write a study over the next two groups. I hope this will be a great time of dialogue within each group as well as an opportunity to share your voice and testimony with the other groups.

Today I encourage you to discuss what God is doing for you and what you would like to share with the church. I will offer some discussion questions to get the conversation started and some suggestions for structure and formatting – but I encourage you to consider these guidelines – not rules. Ultimately, I'm hoping your voices, your praises, your revelations, and your stories will come through what is written.

## Getting the Conversation Started

Here are some discussion questions. If there are other questions you would rather discuss, feel free to do so. I encourage input from each and every group member.

- Discuss a scripture that has recently stood out to you. You may not know the “address” (book chapter: verse) but tell the group what you can remember about it. Why this passage? (Tell the story of when you heard or read it and what it meant to you at that time).
- Discuss a Biblical theme that has recently stood out to you. Why this theme?
- If you could tell the church or individuals in the church something that would help them in the spiritual life, what would it be?
- In the discussions that have taken place to this point, has a general theme or several distinct themes emerged? Discuss what has stood out to you in the conversation thus far.

## Putting it All Together

You may want to start by putting together a general outline or notes of the themes/scriptures that have been discussed up to this point. Have each member commit to taking part of the outline and writing about it or finding scriptures that will further guide their perspectives. This may reveal itself in several ways – you might have each person write about a different part of the outline or you may have each person write their perspectives on the same theme. You may choose not to have the members write at all, but be prepared to share what further reflections they have discovered in the two weeks between meetings.

I hope that your discussion time has offered inspiration and provoked thought. I also pray that God would reveal new insights or strengthen spiritual perspectives in your thoughts throughout the upcoming weeks. In the next CARE group I would like you to put it all together. I will take the submissions and make sure they are formatted into a CARE Group session for the rest of the CARE groups to study later in the year.

I pray that you are blessed as you set your mind to action!