



NAC-USA  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

Victory over  
Evil

Victory over  
Fear

Victory over  
Ourselves

# MIDWEEK GUIDE

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**2016**

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January

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*Starting in 2016, there will be no distinction between the facilitator and participant guides - there will only be one monthly guide for the Midweek Experience Curriculum small group sessions. The guides will continue to provide discussion questions, Bible references, thoughts for further discussion, and notes for the facilitator if they are necessary. The scripts for each session of the month will be in a separate document.*

*Also keep in mind that your small group does not need to answer every question provided in the Midweek guides. There are a range of questions so that each group can answer questions that are applicable to them and that they are comfortable with. Also, take your time with discussing the questions and don't feel the need to rush through them in order to answer every one.*

## 2016 January MIDWEEK GUIDE

### Session 1: Victory over Evil

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#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. The video talked about evil being able to affect us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. What is the relationship between emotional, spiritual, and physical health?

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2. We cannot fully understand what Jesus lived through on the day of his death, so let's try to come up with some examples that we can relate to. Physical hurt is easy to understand. What is a way that you could be hurt emotionally? What is an example of spiritual hurt?

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3. How would you define evil?

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## Bible References

### Jesus' crucifixion

Matthew 27: 11-50, Luke 23: 26-43, John 19: 25-27

## NAC Catechism

### 4.1 Evil—the powers opposed to God

When God created man, He made him according to His own likeness (Genesis 1: 26 et seq.). This means that man has been endowed with a free will. He has the ability to decide between obedience and disobedience to God (Genesis 2: 16–17; 3: 1–7). The ability to do evil is also rooted in this free will. Evil manifests itself when human beings knowingly and intentionally oppose that which is good by distancing themselves from God and His will. Thus the evil in man was not created by God, but was at first only an alternative which man chose by violating the divine commandment. God neither wanted nor created evil, but nevertheless permitted it in that He did not prevent human beings from exercising choice.

#### 4.1.1 Evil as a power opposed to God

Evil is a destructive power that opposes the creation of God. It takes on many forms: it is delusion and subversion, it is untruth, envy, and avarice. It seeks to destroy, and it brings death.

## Going Deeper

*Evil comes from the abuse of free will.*

- C.S. Lewis

4. In what ways does evil enter into our lives? How can you manage the presence of evil in your life?

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5. Sometimes evil is not always something plainly visible to us. In the video, gossip is referred to as an evil that exists in the “little, mundane occurrences of our lives.” What are some examples of small actions that are evil that you might be overlooking? Why is it important to recognize and battle these types of evil?

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6. Evil separates us from God. Is it easier in today’s world to be an agent for evil or an ambassador of Christ? How do our actions communicate to the world around us which side we are on?

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7. Is it possible for our actions to be influenced by evil without us even knowing it?

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8. What is a situation where you would want to fight back or say something, but shouldn’t? What makes this so difficult?

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9. Jesus took the time and energy to take care of His mother even as He was dying on the cross. Do you think it’s harder or easier to be a servant to your family? Why? Why do we sometimes forget to intentionally show our family love?

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## Going Deeper

Evil in the Bible (from the Lexham Theological Wordbook)

Unlike English, where multiple words can refer to degrees of evil or wickedness, biblical Hebrew and Greek may use the same word for different bad experiences, situations, or behaviors. For example, in addition to the moral sense of wicked opposition to God and what he defines as good, the Hebrew word group *rā'ia'i* may indicate simple displeasure (Gen 21:11–12), sadness (Gen 40:7), ugliness (Gen 41:19–21), oppression (Exod 5:19–23), physical harm (Num 35:23), natural disasters (Ezek 5:16–17), or the upheaval of invasion and war (Ezek 7:5; Dan 9:12–14).

10. In the Lord's Prayer we pray "deliver us from the Evil One." Why do think Jesus included this in His prayer? What comes to your mind when you pray that part of the Lord's Prayer?

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11. Read 1 Peter 3:9. What is your reaction when you're the recipient of evil? What is needed in order to repay evil with blessing?

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## Session 2: Victory over Fear

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is your initial reaction to challenges? How different would your life be if your default reaction was faith instead of fear?

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2. In the video, it said that fear creates an awareness and protects us in certain situations. So fear can have good and bad effects. Why do you think this is so?

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3. During moments when fear is overwhelming, what have you done to battle against it? What habits can you form in order to help fight fear or doubt that you will face in life?

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## Bible References

**Proverbs 29:25** – The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.

**Psalms 27:1** - The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

**Matthew 6:33-34** - But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

**Luke 12:32** - Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

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## Going Deeper

*The longer we live in Christ, the greater he becomes in us. It's not that he changes but that we do; we see more of him. We see dimensions, aspects, and characteristics we never saw before, increasing and astonishing increments of his purity, power, and uniqueness.*

- Max Lucado

4. "Christ-followers contract malaria, bury children, and battle addiction, and as a result, face fears. It's not the absence of storms that set us apart. It's whom we discover in the storm: an unstirred Christ." Think about this quote from Max Lucado. What fears have you faced or are you facing right now? Write them down. Share one if you feel comfortable.

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5. Why do you think fear can have such effects on us as crippling, paralyzing, overwhelming, and numbing?

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6. Recall a time in your life when fear prevented you from accepting an opportunity or taking a chance. How can focusing on Jesus Christ help you the next time a similar opportunity presents itself?

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7. How can we turn to God when we are fearful? How can we use the Bible to help us not be overwhelmed by fear? Think about the fear you wrote down in the beginning: how could you pray about it, confidently, to God?

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8. Have you ever experienced love driving out fear? (If you can't remember, think about when you were a child...) What does that feel like?

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9. How can we be a reflection of God's love that drives out fear in each other?

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## Session 3: Victory over Ourselves

### Bible References

**The presentation of Christ in the temple**  
Luke 2:21-38

**Ceremonial laws**  
Lev. 12:2-8  
Exodus 13:1-2

**Salvation for the Gentiles**  
Luke 2:32  
Isaiah 9:2, 49:6  
Acts 1:8

**Proverbs 16:9**

**Jesus as a stumbling block**  
Isaiah 8:14-15  
2 Peter 2:7-8

**Strength in weakness**  
2 Corinthians 12:9-10  
Hebrews 4:15

**Psalms 130**

### Discussion Questions:

1. How could thinking of Jesus' teachings as laws change your commitment to them? What is your biggest struggle with exercising spiritual disciplines? Write down one spiritual discipline or law that you will commit to working on in the next 4 weeks, and how you will work on it. Share with the group and ask for someone to encourage you in that time.

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2. Living a life of obedience to God requires sacrifice. What does sacrificing for the sake of being obedient to God look like today? Have there been times in your life when you have been more willing to make these sacrifices?

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3. We are sometimes most hard on ourselves and sometimes most forgiving to ourselves. Describe the necessary balance between accountability and grace.

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4. How can you engage the Holy Spirit to help you overcome your pride and discover what God wants for your life?

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## Going Deeper

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*And so, when God has the choice of weapons, and He always has, He chooses the weaker weapon, that He may get for Himself the greater renown.*

- C.H. Spurgeon

*God does not need your strength – He has more than enough power of His own! He asks for your weakness – He has none of that, Himself, and His is longing, therefore, to take your weakness and use it as the instrument in His own mighty hands!*

- C.H. Spurgeon

### Matthew Henry Commentary on Luke 2:21-38 (excerpt)

He is set for the rising again of many in Israel, that is, for the conversion of many to God that are dead and buried in sin, and for the consolation of many in God that are sunk and lost in sorrow and despair. Those whom he is set for the fall of may be the same with those whom he is set for the rising again of. He is set *eis ptosin kai anastasin* – for their fall, in order to their rising again; to humble and abase them, and bring them off from all confidence in themselves, that they may be exalted by relying in Christ; he wounds and then heals, Paul falls, and rises again.

5. What process or filter do you use to make decisions in your life? How can we reconcile the fact that God has a plan for us and directs our steps, but we also have free will?

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6. Following the terrorist attacks in Paris, the CA gave a few thoughts: Let us ask God for help also for ourselves, so that we can remain in His house. To be able to dwell in God's house one has to accept His house rules. Hatred and prejudice have no place in God's house. We cannot judge a person simple on the basis of his background or that he is different from us. Likewise, the machinations of the terrorists must not lead us to condemn all foreigners out of hand, not to denounce all Muslims! Discuss these thoughts and talk about why it might be easy to judge, and what we can do to stop ourselves from prejudice.

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7. Simeon said to Mary and Joseph that, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel..." In Jesus' time, who rose and who stumbled on His teachings?

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8. How could a teaching of Christ cause you to stumble? How could His teachings cause you to rise?

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9. Hebrews 4:15 reads, *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.* What does it mean to you that Jesus sympathizes with your weaknesses?

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10. In a recent DSG the Chief Apostle wrote: *Children of God can never be content to merely pray every day, attend the divine services, and bring their offerings into the house of God.* Our faith is more than a series of boxes we check off once they've been completed. How can we make our faith an inseparable part of our being?

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11. Fill in this sentence:

**In 2016 I would like to become \_\_\_\_\_.**

Now write down two ways that you can work on making that true by the end of the year. Find someone in the group that can hold you accountable.

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