

BREAKING *the* Barriers

By

JASON FRENN

An Eight-Session Study Guide for Small
Groups and Individuals

Breaking the Barriers Study Guide
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WHAT NATIONAL LEADERS ARE SAYING

“In *Breaking the Barriers*, Jason Frenn offers a clear, easy-to-follow-and-implement plan for breaking through the barriers that might be holding you back from the freedom and success you desire. He shares from his own and others’ stories in a friendly, conversational style that is sure to encourage and inspire.”

—**Zig Ziglar**

Author and Motivational Teacher

“If you want to overcome the issues that are holding you back from reaching your greatest potential, *Breaking the Barriers* is a must read!”

—**Dr. Robert H. Schuller**

Pastor, Crystal Cathedral

“Jason Frenn invites every Christian to examine his own life—not for so-called self improvement, but for obedience to Christ. This book is well grounded scripturally, and can be a valuable resource.”

—**Chuck Colson**

Founder, Prison Fellowship

“In a age when people are fed up with superficial self-help do-it-yourself programs that lead to poor results, Jason offers readers excellent insights and practical steps to become all that God has destined them to be. I was Jason's pastor and I know he lives what he preaches!”

—**Dr. George Wood**

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STUDY GUIDE AT A GLANCE

BREAKING THE BARRIERS STUDY GUIDE

Purpose:

The purpose of this study guide is twofold. First, it will lead you through the process of breaking through the barriers in your life. Second, it is designed to prepare you for your small group interaction, because the things you learn can touch someone else's heart and be a tremendous help in their journey as well. Each *session* in this study guide should be completed as homework prior to each small group meeting.

Structure:

The study guide is divided into eight different *sessions*. I encourage you to work through the material on your own several days before your small group meeting. Each session should take approximately thirty to forty-five minutes to complete.

This eight-week program, which includes this study guide and your small group meeting interaction, has been created to work in a group setting.

If you use this study guide as a daily devotional, you can work through each session throughout the week. This comes out to about fifteen minutes a day, including the respective reading assignments in *Breaking the Barriers*.

Additional Materials:

In addition to this workbook, you will need a copy of *Breaking the Barriers* and a **Bible**. Please read each chapter of *Breaking the Barriers* before you work through the corresponding session in this study guide. Your small group leader will have any additional materials you may need.

Questions to Consider:

At the end of each session, there is a section entitled Questions to Consider. These questions are for your small group discussion.

Applications:

At the conclusion of each session, there is a section entitled Applications. I highly encourage you to apply what you have learned during your study session that week. As you do, you will unleash God's power in your life to move beyond the issues that have been holding you back. You will begin to experience a whole new level of meaning, significance, freedom, peace, and strength.

Be sure to take this study guide to your small group meetings, whether or not the assignment is complete. That way, it will be easier to participate in the group interaction.

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DISCOVERY

P A R T I

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 1 - The Three Questions of Life

Please read the Introduction of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

I. Why am I here?

Worthy, O Master! Yes, our God! Take the glory! the honor! the power!

You created it all; It was created because you wanted it. (Rev. 4:11 THE MESSAGE)

God doesn't lie. He says you were beautifully and fearfully created for a great purpose. Since the foundation of the world, He looked forward to giving you life. Of the billions of people who live on this planet, no one is like you. You are destined for greatness, and you are not here by some random evolutionary chance.

In order to reach your God given potential—to move beyond your barriers—you first need to discover *why* you are here (See *Breaking the Barriers* pp. xxii–xxiii).

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. (Eph. 1:11–12 THE MESSAGE)

Using the two scripture verses referenced above as a starting point, write out the reason(s) *why* you feel God has placed you here on earth.

II. What am I doing with my life?

Are there times when you feel disconnected from God's purpose for your life? Do you feel you are achieving nothing of eternal value? Do you lack direction? An uncertainty lurks over us when we sense we are achieving very little of lasting value.

Maybe you're not where you want to be, or even worse, you're stuck in survival mode. Sooner or later, we all struggle with the question, "*What am I doing with my life?*"

If you've longed to break the cycle of going around in circles, you must identify the barriers that hold you back.

The question is, in *what* area of your life do you need to experience a breakthrough?

What is the greatest obstacle you face? Is it spiritual emptiness or the lack of power over the temptations in your life? Is it a challenge to your health or weight? Is it a barrier you see within your family, marriage, career, or finances? Do you feel stuck? If so, *what* are your barriers?

Answering the following questions will help you define some of the areas where you need a significant breakthrough.

What keeps you awake at night? _____

What are some of your greatest frustrations? _____

What is your greatest fear? _____

If you could snap your fingers and make three specific things happen immediately, what would you want to happen?

If you could do anything and know you wouldn't fail, what would you do? _____

What is the biggest question you ask yourself at this point in your life? _____

What are you trying to be, do, have, or accomplish but haven't measured up so far?

Why do you feel stuck? _____

Thus far, we've talked about *why* God has placed us here, and we've looked at some of the things that hold us back. As we conclude this session, let's turn our focus to the question that inspired you to pick up this workbook.

III. How do I break through the barriers that hold me back?

This is the question everyone wants answered, and the book *Breaking the Barriers* aims to help you discover *how* to break those barriers that hold you back.

Reading the book will help you answer questions like, How do I break out of survival mode? How do I get *unstuck* and become a better Christian, parent, or spouse? How do I walk in God's will and advance in my career, make more money, forgive my past, move beyond my personal baggage, or lose weight? How do I make the quantum leap? How do I become all I am destined to be without losing my soul in the process?

Questions to consider:

1. Is it possible to become who you want to be *and* who God wants you to be? If so, what adjustments do you need to make?
2. If you could snap your fingers and make something happen immediately, what would you want to happen?
3. What are some of your greatest frustrations?

Applications:

1. Everyday, remind yourself that you are a child of God, someone who He fearfully and wonderfully created to have fellowship with Him.
2. Remember that God will help you overcome insurmountable barriers to become exactly who He wants you to be.

NOTES:

Breaking the Barriers Prayer Journal

Date	Name	Prayer Request	Date Answered
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DISCOVERY

PART II

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 2 - A NEW BEGINNING

Please read Chapter 1 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

There is nothing you can do to make God turn His back on you. You are the apple of His eye. It's because of God's love for you that you can be assured that He wants you to move beyond all that is holding you back.

You are his child, and He loves you with an immeasurable love. Your power to break barriers comes when you—as His child—reach for the gifts He's so willing to give you. All of the power you need in life comes from Him, your loving heavenly Father.

Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture. (Rom. 8:35 THE MESSAGE)

I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us. (Rom. 8:38–39, THE MESSAGE)

Now, imagine for a moment that God decided to sit down and write you a letter in response to the letter you just wrote to Him. In it, He talks about your importance as a child of God. He talks about supporting you through all you'll ever face, including your past, present, and future. What would you expect the letter to say?

Take a few minutes and write down what you believe God would say to you today about the issues you face. Before you begin, take thirty seconds and ask the Lord to help you put *His* words on paper that genuinely reflect His heart for you. You might say, *“Lord, help me to see my life from your perspective. I open my heart to hear from you, and I ask you to reveal your truth about your love for me and the plans you have for my life. Help me to hear your voice. In Christ’s name. Amen.”*

After praying, turn the next page, **place your pen in the hand you NORMALLY use to write**, and begin writing the words you feel God would want you to hear at this time in your life. Start the letter with “Dear ...,” and write your name.

As you compare the two letters, what are some of the things that stand out to you?

How would you describe the tone of your letter to God?

How would you describe the tone of the letter God wrote to you?

Once you've completed the second letter, do not discard it. Later on in the program, you will refer back to it. Now, turn your attention to the perfect guide for our journey.

Christ: the Perfect Guide for Our Journey

Christ is the central figure of the New Testament, and many of the prophets of the Old Testament foretold His coming. When the authorities of His day asked Him who He was, He responded, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6 NIV).

Today, many people need a guide because they're stuck. The good news is that He is the door through which we can experience true freedom. He knows the way. He is the perfect guide.

When we're stuck, we need relief. In the midst of the storm, we need direction. Sooner or later, we all need a compass. Sooner or later, we all need help. Sooner or later, we all need God.

When the turbulence of life overwhelms us, He shines His love upon us and parts the clouds. Just when you think you are not worth anything, God says you are worth the price of the death of His Son.

Turning your life over to Christ is the first step in the right direction. Allow Him to be the compass and guide you need, and you will break the barriers in your life!

If you want to experience a new beginning, ask God for help. If you want to live life and not just survive it, ask Christ for guidance. If you want God's power to help you break the barriers and destructive patterns in your life, pray this simple prayer. It will serve as a wonderful new beginning for your life!

Lord, I recognize that without your help I cannot move beyond the issues that hold me back. I thank you for loving me and for reaching out to me. I truly want a new beginning. I want to wipe the slate clean. Forgive me for anything I've done that is offensive to you or anyone else. Give me your strength and your power to change. I invite you to be my guide and my Lord and to make me a new person today. I ask this in your precious name. Amen.

Friend, as we begin a new life with God, something wonderful transpires. Notice what He says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 (THE MESSAGE), “Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it!”

Before we conclude this session, let's look at a brief overview of what lies ahead in our journey. Regardless if we're looking for marital harmony, family unity, spiritual strength, physical or emotional health, financial stability, or simply peace of mind, we must embrace the three fundamental pillars of life.

They are: right **values** (the heart of the Father), **judgment** (the wisdom of the Son), and **strength** (the discipline of the Spirit). These are the three pillars that form a blessed and significant life—a life that reaches its potential—and that fill our world with significance, meaning, and potential.

A full description of these fundamental pillars of life can be found on pages 10 and 11 in *Breaking the Barriers*. These pillars help us see *why* we are here, *what* we should do, and *how* we are to do it.

Questions to consider:

1. According to *Breaking the Barriers*, pages 5–9, how does avoiding personal responsibility hinder our ability to move beyond the barriers that hold us back?
2. What's the symbolism of using your non-dominant hand to write your letter to God?
3. After you completed the letter from God to you, what were some of the things that God wanted to say to you?

Applications:

1. Every day, remind yourself that you are a child of God, someone who He fearfully and wonderfully created to have fellowship with Him.
2. Remember that God will help you overcome insurmountable barriers to become exactly who He wants you to be.

NOTES:

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PILLAR ONE

GRABBING HOLD OF GOD'S HEART

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 3

Please read Chapter 2 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own. (Lev. 20:26 NIV)

Every great failure in life is preceded by a moral one. Look at all the celebrities, politicians, and famous individuals who have ruined their careers and lives. How did it happen? They first made a wrong moral choice. People who don't have the foundation of a godly heart will never reach their potential. They will never move beyond the confines of their personal baggage. As long as their moral compass is broken, the closest they can get to a meaningful and significant life will be to see it in someone else. Instead, they will continue to be trapped in the endless cycles of a frustrated existence. No matter how hard they try, they have no chance for discovering a better life.

What about you? Do you want to break the barriers and move beyond what holds you back? Do you want to discover the great life that God has planned for you? Do you want to thrive and break out of survival mode? I trust your answer is an overwhelming yes! If it is, let's begin with the first and essential pillar for experiencing a meaningful and significant life.

In this session, you'll learn the essence of God's character. Then you'll examine your own moral compass and learn the steps necessary to create a godly heart.

God's Heart, the Essence of Pillar One

The first pillar is the heart of the Father. In essence, it's the character of God the Father. Pages 31–36 in *Breaking the Barriers* describes the attributes of this first pillar. In the spaces below, list those attributes along with a one-sentence explanation of each.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

In addition to the eight attributes listed above, there are many other characteristics of God's heart, including: holiness, virtue, righteousness, justice, truth, honesty, steadfastness, respect, integrity, and service.

In the face of adversity, challenge, or daily routine, these traits govern our actions and responses. They form the moral compass, or godly direction, we need to give us right mission and help us align ourselves with *why* we are here.

Godly character is the most fundamental and important building block of our lives. Everything we do, think, and say reflects what is on the inside. For what we do is a reflection of who we are. We are not who we are because of what we do. We do what we do because of who we are.

How important is creating a godly heart, making God's values your own? A godly heart directly impacts your ability to break through the barriers that keep your life in chains and will save you from making choices that will forever scar your life and those of your loved ones.

How Godly Is Your Heart?

The following questionnaire is meant to point to tendencies in our personal moral standards and ethical practices. Try and be as honest and transparent as you can.

Using a scale of 1 to 5, answer the following questions. Please mark your answers in the space provided at the end of each question. If you are in complete agreement with the statement, place a 1 in the space. If you are uncertain, place a 3. If you strongly disagree, then place a 5 in the space provided.

If you are concerned about privacy, feel free to use a separate sheet of paper to write down your numeric answers.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Almost Never, 5 = Strongly Disagree

1. While driving alone in traffic, I find myself becoming angry and saying things I would not say in public. _____
2. Late at night when I cannot sleep, I turn on the television in search of programs unsuitable for the rest of my family. _____
3. The poor are poor because of their own doing, and therefore, I do very little to help them. _____
4. When a dispute arises between a co-worker and myself, I say things behind his or her back to make myself feel better. _____
5. Telling the truth is important most but not all the time. After all, what people don't know can't hurt them. _____

6. I believe it is acceptable to have sex outside of marriage as long as both people truly love each other. _____
7. Because of the pressures in my life, I drink alcohol frequency. I have at least ten drinks in a week. _____
8. I have not been completely honest with the government in reporting my income taxes. _____
9. I am drawn to different forms of pornography. _____
10. There are several people in my past I have never been able to forgive. To this day, when I think about what they did to me, the same feelings of hurt and anger come back. _____
11. When caught in a little “white lie” and confronted, I lie again so as not to become embarrassed. _____
12. I believe the Bible is full of contradictions and therefore cannot be trusted as a source for a healthy life and godly living. _____
13. I don’t give to charity, because the poor and needy are looking for a free ride. _____
14. I illegally download software, programs, or files. Even though I don’t pay for them, I do it anyway. _____
15. I fantasize about inappropriate sexual activity. _____
16. Many times, I find myself struggling with evil or morbid feelings and suicidal thoughts. _____
17. Whenever my friends, family members, and co-workers get a promotion or are highly celebrated by those around them, I feel jealous and envious of the attention and praise. _____

18. It's a waste of money to give to churches and non-profit organizations, because they are filled with financial embezzlers. _____
19. Whenever I see a big star, politician, or minister fall because of some moral failure, inside I feel like I am a better person and am glad to see them put in their place. _____
20. The government of my country is full of corruption. As a result, I do whatever I can to beat the system, including breaking minor laws, cheating, or lying. That's the only way to get ahead. _____
21. I hardly ever attend a church, nor do I believe it is necessary. _____
22. I am addicted to mood-altering substances such as alcohol, drugs, or pain medications. _____
23. I lash out in anger and at times I am cruel to my family members or friends. _____
24. I take money or items without permission, thinking it is okay to do so as long as it wasn't something real big. _____
25. I physically or sexually abuse members in my family. _____
26. I do not know if there is a God. _____
27. I regularly break the speed limit and other rules of the road. After all, everyone else does it. _____
28. I cheat on my tests, quizzes, and exams. _____
29. I have been involved in an illicit affair and have not told my spouse. _____
30. I turn in falsified receipts or invoices to my employer as a way to recoup money I have lost. _____

Total up all of the numbers you have written in the spaces following each question. Use the point scale below to determine where you are on the continuum of moral and ethical behavior. Though not scientific, this test will give an indication of where you may be in terms of virtue, honesty, godliness, and moral character.

130 to 150 points = You have a highly developed moral character and conscience for what is right and wrong, and live according to those convictions.

100-129 points = You have a significantly developed moral character, but may slip occasionally.

80-99 points = You have developed many areas of your moral character but are somewhat uncertain about right and wrong in several important areas of life.

50-79 points = You have a significant deficiency in your moral character and are in need of intervention and moral and spiritual guidance.

30-49 points = You are lacking in almost every area of moral development and will most likely have a significant problem with authority, marriage, child rearing, and general functioning in society.

Undoubtedly, there are areas of our heart that need improvement. No one is perfect. No one is exempt. The Bible says, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23 NIV).

It’s important to remember that it’s not our actions that make us good or bad. Rather, according to God, our actions directly reflect the condition of our heart—who we are. *“It’s who you are, not what you say and do, that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds”* (Luke 6:45 THE MESSAGE).

Thus, *good* is what we need to become, and that requires a change of heart. That's why we need to create a godly heart in our lives, which will help us overcome all that holds us back.

Creating a Godly Heart in Our Lives

Pages 27–42 in *Breaking the Barriers* clearly lay out five powerful steps to form a godly heart. After carefully reading that portion, please answer each of the following questions.

How do you create the **desire** to form a godly heart?

What are some of the **attributes** of God's character that form a godly heart?

How can you **ask** God for help?

In what ways can you **put** godly qualities into practice?

Practically speaking, how can you **form** a small accountability group?

Questions to consider:

1. What three attributes of God's heart do feel are most lacking in society today?
(*Breaking the Barriers* pp. 31–36)
2. What two attributes of God's heart do you feel you have?
3. What are some of the consequences for people who do *not* have a godly heart? What can they expect out of life?

Applications:

1. Think about the five steps you can take today to begin building a godly heart.
2. List two attributes of a godly heart and commit each day to living them out.
3. Talk with several people to whom you are close about forming a group that will commit to pull you up instead of tear you down.

NOTES:

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U N L E A S H I N G T H E P O W E R O F G O D ' S H E A R T I N Y O U R L I F E

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 4

Please read Chapter 3 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. (Eccl. 9:10,NIV)

Let's fast-forward to the one event in your future that will summarize your life unlike any other. Imagine for a moment that you are attending your own funeral. All your friends and family are in attendance and God has made a cameo appearance and is seated in the front row.

One by one, your children, spouse, parents, relatives, friends, coworkers, and God stand behind the podium and share the impact you made on their lives. Ask yourself the following questions (popularized in Stephen Covey's best seller *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*):

- What would you like to be said about you at your funeral?
- What do you want your spouse to say about you?

- What do you want your children and closest friends to say?
- What would you like God to say?

If we are going to break the barriers and become all God destined us to be, we must complete this vital step in building a godly heart and a godly mission. Take a few moments and write out what you would want the following people to say about you at your funeral.

Spouse:

Children:

Family:

Close Friends:

Parents:

Coworkers:

God:

Believe it or not, the attributes you've listed above are the essence of your aspirations. They represent the core values of the legacy you wish to leave behind. It's your history written in advance. When all the dust settles in your life, when all has been stripped away, these words will be the primary way people remember you.

As you combine the godly attributes discussed in the previous session with what you want your loved ones to say about you, you begin to form a mission statement with purpose, significance, meaning, and most importantly, godliness. Once you form a mission statement based upon the attributes of the heart of God, the first pillar will be firmly established in your life. This gives you a clear purpose and a strong sense of direction. Here's how to do it.

Forming a Godly Mission

Pages 62–65 in *Breaking the Barriers* adequately depict the process of putting together a powerful godly mission statement. Also, page 63 talks about an excellent example of Jesus' mission statement found in the book of Acts.

Write out a mission statement and keep it brief, simple, and to the point. It should touch on what you aim to be as well as mentioning your impact on the significant relationships in your life. It is something you can live towards each day. Here's an example:

To be a (man or woman) who aims to (accomplish, do, or become what you desire).

Then follow this statement with specific sentences or supporting points that talk about your actions that will help you get there.

Use the space below to sketch out your mission statement and how you want to be remembered.

General Mission Statement:

First Supporting Point:

Second Supporting Point:

Third Supporting Point:

Questions to consider:

1. Can you give an example of how people with whom you hang out have influenced you for good or bad?
2. What would you like written on your tombstone?
3. What specifically would you want your closest friends and family members to say about you at your funeral?

Applications:

1. Think about the comments you want to be made by those at your funeral and begin living your life according to those sentiments.
2. Print out your mission statement and place it in a prominent place where you can see it each day.

NOTES:

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PILLAR TWO

MAKING GODLY SENSE

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 5

Please read Chapter 4 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. (Prov. 2:6–8 NIV)

Many people are good. Few are good *and* wise. Unfortunately, being good isn't good enough. Why? Because good people who lack godly wisdom are stuck behind the barriers that separate them from being all they can be. Just look at the scores of decent people who make poor spiritual, relational, financial, marital, and career choices that cause their lives to become stagnant. They're not stuck because they lack a good heart. They're stuck because they lack godly wisdom.

How about you? Are you one of those that the Bible calls foolish? Are you a good person who lacks wisdom, and as a result lives a frustrated life? Do you want the godly wisdom that will guide you to a meaningful and significant life? I trust you want both a godly heart and godly wisdom.

If that's your desire, you are about to discover the power of the second pillar: the wisdom of Christ. Godly wisdom gives us the ability to ensure we are good people, and we are making good decisions that are harmonious with our mission. With godly wisdom based upon the mind of Christ, we judge every decision we make in the light of our godly mission. Our road map, then, becomes clear.

The wisdom of Christ is a step above all other forms of common sense and wisdom. The Lord states in Isaiah 55:8 (NIV), "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." What sets His wisdom miles above our own? He is the Designer of the universe. He knows the intricacies of every atom of every molecule of every cell of every organism. He is the Author of the genetic code.

God's perspective is perfect, unchanging, and never failing. Therefore, if we partner with Him, we find He is the greatest source for insight and decision-making power.

As we begin, make a list of five areas in your life where you need God's wisdom. Be specific about where you need a breakthrough:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Fear and Respect

Our starting point for gaining godly wisdom must be what the Bible calls "the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10 (NIV) says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding." The word *fear* in this

context does not mean paranoia, anxiety, terror, or panic. Rather, it means respect for or awe of somebody or something. In other words, respect for the Lord and appreciation of His greatness are the starting point for acquiring His wisdom. Why is this so important? If you respect the Lord, you'll do what He says and follow His lead.

When you think about the greatness of God, what sorts of things come to your mind? Take a few moments and study the passages found in Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 4:13 and write down some of the things that come to your mind regarding the great things God has done.

People and Proverbs

People and Proverbs are two important ways God helps us grow in His wisdom. Spending time with people who have godly wisdom affects our lives in a powerful way. Provided our hearts are open, we cannot help but be influenced by their example. Furthermore, studying the Proverbs on a regular basis guides us biblically so that we are not swayed by the winds that might carry us off course.

Birds of a Feather Flock Together

Take two minutes and think about the six people with whom you spend the most time. Your kids and spouse count as one person. List them in the spaces below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

As you look at the list of people you've jotted down, ask yourself: Do these people sum up the person I want to become? Do they edify me? Do they pull me up instead of tear me down?

Whether we want to admit it or not, we will become the common denominator of the six people we spend the most amount of time with. *Birds of a feather flock together.* In essence, this means that those who have similar likes and preferences tend to congregate in groups. This is true for better or for worse.

If we hang out with people who are racists, those who struggle with some form of addiction, or those who simply make poor choices, then we too may experience a similar struggle in our lives. The values of those with whom we spend time have an effect on our lives.

The same is true with regard to wisdom. If we spend time with those who are wise and see things from a godly perspective, then we will learn from them and grow in the godly wisdom they have learned. Proverbs 13:20 (NIV) says, "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm."

As we set out in search of Christ's wisdom, we must surround ourselves with people who value God's wisdom and pursue it. Then we will make decisions like they do, *wise* decisions.

The Proverbs

At the beginning of our journey, I asked you a question. It's worth repeating. If you could snap your fingers and make three specific things happen immediately, what

would you want to happen? God asked Solomon a similar question. Instead of responding to the Lord’s offer with a laundry list of riches, glory, fame, and possessions, Solomon said, “Yes, give me wisdom and knowledge as I come and go among this people—for who on his own is capable of leading these, your glorious people?” (2 Chron. 1:10 THE MESSAGE).

Instead of saying, “God, give me greatness,” he said, “Give me wisdom and knowledge.” Instead of praying, “Lord, help me break one barrier today,” he prayed, “Lord, teach me to break every barrier for the rest of my life.”

God directed Solomon, the wisest man who has ever lived, to write down thirty-one chapters of godly wisdom, insights, and judgment in the book of Proverbs. One of the greatest ways to acquire godly wisdom is by reading and meditating on a proverb each day, one for each day of the month.

Take a few minutes and read Proverbs 3:13-20. Once you have completed the passage, list any insights that spoke directly to you and your situation:

Chapter four of *Breaking the Barriers* lays out the five simple ways to become wise. Each one builds upon the other to help you develop into a godly and wise person. Take a few minutes, review them, and list them in the spaces below along with their respective scripture verses:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Questions to consider:

1. If God said to you, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you,” how would you answer Him?
2. How do the people with whom you spend most of your time impact your ability to be wise?
3. What were some of the experiences you’ve had with friends who had a poor influence on you instead of lifting you up?

Applications:

Make a list of several people who display godly wisdom, and look for ways to spend more time with them.

Dedicate ten minutes to read and meditate on a different Proverb each day.

NOTES:

BREAKING *the* Barriers

By
JASON FRENN

U N L E A S H I N G T H E P O W E R O F C H R I S T ' S W I S D O M I N Y O U R L I F E

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 6

Please read Chapter 5 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. (Prov. 3:5 NIV)

There are things that every human being desires. We all want to be healthy, feel secure, have peace of mind, attain a level of financial stability, have decent friends, feel fulfilled, and have healthy family relationships. One thing is certain—whether you believe God wants these things for your life or not—you cannot attain and keep them without His wisdom.

Imagine having the wisdom to know the right time to quit your job and start a new career. Wouldn't it be great to know when to buy or sell your home or make changes to your retirement portfolio? Imagine having the godly wisdom to choose the right mate and to know how many kids you should have and when? Choosing the right major in college, the right school for your children, and the right friends to hang out with all entail wisdom. Above all, the most important decision you'll ever make will be to “trust in the Lord with

all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5 NIV). Try to envision how radically different your life will be as you embrace the wisdom of Christ.

If your desire is to be healthy, feel secure, have peace of mind, attain a level of financial stability, have decent friends, feel fulfilled, and have healthy family relationships, undoubtedly there will be challenges. There will be roadblocks. There will be times when you feel stuck. The following steps are to help you become un-stuck and shed godly wisdom upon your life.

Five Steps for Becoming *Un-Stuck* Using Wise Judgment

Pages 126–131 in *Breaking the Barriers* contain five powerful lessons that when put into practice will serve you well in your quest to overcome the challenges you face. According to the text, what are the steps?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Just remember, there’s no obstacle too big. There is no barrier too overwhelming. There is no setback too large. There is no day of suffering too great. God’s hand will deliver you, and He graciously gives the wisdom necessary to break the barriers that confront you.

When you feel that barriers are mounting all around, when you feel as if there is no hope for tomorrow, when you think you’ve used up all your options, when nothing makes sense, trust the Lord and lean not on your own understanding. He will be there for you. God will help you, because He loves you. That is one of the wisest things you can do.

Is there one particular struggle you're facing that seems insurmountable? If so, what specifically makes it difficult to overcome?

In regard to the particular struggle you're facing, is there an aspect that seems manageable?

Powerful Examples of People Who Embraced God's Wisdom

In 1 Kings 3:16-28, what did **King Solomon** do that displayed God's wisdom?

List three things Jesus discerned in order to save the life of the woman caught in adultery in John 8:2-11 (*Breaking the Barriers*, pp. 115-117).

1.

2.

3.

Instead of debating with Satan, what did **Jesus** use as a way to respond to the temptations found in Matthew 4:1–11? Why did **Jesus'** response work (see James 4:7)?

Before we close this session, remember something important. Your possibilities will be endless when you choose God's wisdom for your life. Your potential will have no limits. God will lead you from survival mode to a life that thrives! As you unleash the power of Christ's wisdom in your life, the second pillar will be in place, and the challenges you face will become surmountable.

Questions to consider:

1. What are some of the consequences for people who do *not* embrace godly wisdom? What can they expect out of life?
2. What Biblical character would you want to mentor you? In what area of your life?
3. According to *Breaking the Barriers*, asking questions and listening is a practical way to build godly wisdom in your life. Which of these two areas do you need to improve? Which one would your family or spouse say you would need to improve? What are some of the ways you can improve them?

Applications:

1. Be patient and remember to ¹ **begin** with prayer, ² **re-examine** your barriers, ³ **embrace** all solutions, ⁴ **analyze** your top solutions and ⁵ **keep** seeking godly counsel (BREAK).
2. Each day, look for opportunities to practice the listening skills found on pages 136–140 of *Breaking the Barriers*.

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By
JASON FRENN

PILLAR THREE

PEACE FOR YOUR SOUL

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 7

Please read Chapter 6 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Tim. 1:7 NLT)

We know that *godly*, *wise*, and *disciplined* people inevitably reach their goals. They live blessed and meaningful lives. But why do *good* and *wise* people find it difficult to make progress? What prevents them from getting un-stuck and living the life they desire? Think about the many well-intentioned doctors who are out of shape, ministers who don't practice what they preach, and politicians who can't live by the laws they work so hard to legislate. The one missing ingredient seems to be the *emotional and spiritual strength* to put into practice what they know to be the right and wise thing to do. This is what I call the third pillar, the discipline of the Spirit.

The power of God's Spirit gives us the fuel to put into action what we know to be good and wise (Isaiah 40:28–31). When we have our mission (the heart of the Father) and

the right course of action (the wisdom of the Son), the discipline of the Spirit (pillar three) empowers us to stay the course until we make the breakthrough we seek.

What about you? Are you looking forward to an incredible breakthrough? Do you expect to conquer the obstacles that stand in your way, reach your goals, and move beyond all that keeps you stuck? Are you ready to become all that God destined you to be? I trust that your answer is an overwhelming yes. If that's the case, let's begin building the third pillar in our lives.

In this session, we will focus on two important aspects: moving beyond our fears and taking on the mind of Christ (thinking the way God wants you to think). They will help us gain the greatest asset for building strength: God's peace.

Fear Is Your Worst Enemy

Fear is the most paralyzing force on the face of the planet. It brings us to a standstill and robs us of strength. It stifles our potential for breaking barriers. But the Holy Spirit works against fear. He opposes anxiety. He strengthens our emotional resources so we can become disciplined to break the barriers that hold us back (see Ps. 18, Isa. 40:31, and 2 Cor. 12:9).

As you pass through turbulent waters, what are some of the fears or concerns that drain your energy?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Here's what the Lord wants you to remember during difficult times: "Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help

you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you" (Isa. 41:10 THE MESSAGE). God loves you, friend, and He will see you through. Don't let fear rob you of the peace that only God can give.

As you look at the following Bible verses, how do they speak to your specific situation?

Psalms 27:1-3: _____

Psalm 29:11: _____

The first step in attaining godly strength is to recognize our fears and move away from them by moving toward God's peace. This will give us the strength we need.

Forming Godly Self-Talk

Building godly discipline entails changing the way we think. We must begin to rewrite the scripts in our minds that fill us with fear. They must be replaced with healthy self-talk taken from God's Word. As God's thoughts become ours, we begin to walk in strength, confidence, and tranquility. Here are some passages that help us think the way God wants us to.

What does **Psalms 84:5** say about those who find their strength in the Lord?

According to **Zechariah 2:8**, how does God refer to those whom He loves?

In **Isaiah 54:17**, what does God say about the weapons and attacks that come against you?

In **John 16:27**, what profound statement did Jesus make regarding those who love Him and believe He came from God?

In **Deuteronomy 7:9**, how long does God keep his covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments?

How does God show His love to us according to **1 John 4:9**?

According to **Isaiah 54:4**, **Hebrews 10:17** and **Isaiah 43:25** what does God say about your past?

Exercise Your God-Talk

Make God's thoughts your thoughts. He inspired these Bible verses to encourage and help you, so take advantage of them. Utilize them to rewrite your self-talk and to renew way you think (see Rom..12:2).

The following exercise will help you develop Christ-like thinking. In essence, it's taking on the mind of Christ. Take a moment and reflect on the negative thoughts you hear in your head during times of turmoil or stress. Several examples of these destructive thoughts might be:

- How could I be so stupid?*
- I'm never going to amount to anything.*

- If people really knew me, they wouldn't like me.*
- I can't do anything right.*
- I'm not as smart as the rest.*

Using the space on the left side of the following form, write down your negative self-talk that has become habitual. Once you've written down everything that seems to have a destructive pattern in your thoughts, lay your pen down and ask God to help you see things from His perspective. Ask Him to help you see yourself as He sees you.

On the right side of the form, write down what God says about you in His Word. The Bible says in Romans 9:26 that we are created in God's image and that we were destined to become the sons and daughters of God. Who knows his offspring better than a father? With that in mind, write down what God says are your qualities as His son or daughter. When you are ready, begin the exercise.

Tell yourself periodically throughout the day how God thinks and feels about you. After several days, you will notice a significant difference in your attitudes, feelings, and emotional resources. Again, what you are trying to do is re-record the script in your mind to replace the negative self-talk that drains your emotional resources.

If you feel adventurous, take the method a step further. Write out what the Bible says about you as a script. Then record it onto your iPod or any MP3 player. Each morning as you begin your day, listen to what God says about you from a source you can trust.

Pages 158–162 in *Breaking the Barriers* lay out the third Biblical method for this session that will help you experience God’s peace. This will, in turn, help you build your strengths so that you can directly face the issues that hold you back.

The Bottom Line

Having godly discipline is doing what you know is right in the midst of an emotional storm. It’s tapping into God’s strength to do what you know is right in the midst of apathy.

As we close this session, remember to take care of yourself as God would. Take care of your spirit by reading the Bible, praying, and worshiping the Lord. Take care of your emotions by finding God’s peace and replacing the negative self-talk in your head with God’s thoughts.

Questions to consider:

1. What are some of the fears that keep us from moving forward?
2. In what ways do you beat yourself up?
3. What does God want you to say to yourself everyday? (Read 1 John 4:9, Zech. 2:8, Heb. 10:17 and Isa. 43:25.)

Applications:

1. Meditate on God's truth instead of the fears and anxieties that drain your emotions.
2. Write down some of the biblical things God wants you to say to yourself each day. Record biblical scripts into an MP3 player and listen to them each morning.
3. Meditate on a portion of scripture and imagine yourself as an actual participant in the story (see *Breaking the Barriers* pp. 158–162).

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BREAKING *the* Barriers

By
JASON FRENN

U N L E A S H I N G T H E P O W E R O F T H E S P I R I T I N Y O U R L I F E

STUDY GUIDE SESSION 8

Please read Chapter 7 of *Breaking the Barriers* before beginning this session.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:13 NIV)

God wants to give you the power to change your life. You are His child, and He is more than willing to reach out with the gifts you need to break through all that holds you back. He gives you godliness for a clear mission. He gives you wisdom to make the right decisions along the way. And He gives you strength to ensure you have the necessary energy to make it.

What do you need to know in order to break barriers? The following disciplines promise to be very helpful in your quest to firmly establish the third pillar. Applied to all areas of life, these disciplines will empower you to gain victory over the challenges you face. Let's start with the most essential, prayer.

1. The Discipline of Prayer

Pages 175–179 in *Breaking the Barriers*

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:16–18)

Of all the spiritual disciplines, prayer is the most fundamental and necessary. It is the primary way we communicate with God. Prayer is how we express our worship, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, and desires to our heavenly Father.

According to the text, prayer is absolutely crucial in _____
 _____ (*Breaking the Barriers*, p. 176).

Prayer brings us _____ and _____ and ushers us
 into God's presence regardless of _____
 (*Breaking the Barriers*, p. 176).

Without prayer, we can't _____
 (*Breaking the Barriers*, p. 176).

“The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous” (Prov. 15:29 NIV). Make prayer a daily discipline, and every area of your life will greatly benefit. Building a disciplined prayer life opens the lines of communication with God so you can develop the next discipline: hearing God's voice. It's one thing to talk to God. It's another thing to hear Him.

2. The Discipline of Hearing God's Voice

Pages 180–186 in *Breaking the Barriers*

How do you know when God speaks to you? This is the one question people ask me more than any other. God wants us to fine-tune our spiritual ears to hear His direction for our lives. The Bible says, “Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track” (Prov. 3:6 THE MESSAGE). The ability to

discern His voice helps us break barriers and overcome adversity. God warmly desires to help us develop this wonderful discipline.

Name three ways that the Lord might speak to us as described in *Breaking the Barriers* on pages 180–181:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The book outlines four ways to discern whether or not it is the Lord who is speaking to us. These biblical standards serve as filters, and we need godly wisdom to use them correctly. That’s why having the second pillar firmly established in our lives is vital. Godly wisdom helps us separate God’s voice from the nonsense we conjure up or get from someone else.

According to *Breaking the Barriers* (pp. 180–182), what are the four filters?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Growing in the discipline of hearing God’s voice enables us to discern His direction for our life. It is essential for developing the next discipline: obeying His will. It’s one thing to know what God wants us to do, It’s another thing to obey Him.

3. The Discipline of Obeying God’s Will Pages 186–192 in *Breaking the Barriers*

The difference between those who break their barriers and those who don’t is simple. Those who listen to God’s voice and do what they’re told move ahead (see Deut.

28:1–14). They partner with the Spirit, establish the third pillar in their lives, and obey His voice.

According to the text, what does the term *obedience* mean (*Breaking the Barriers*, p. 187)?

Hezekiah is an excellent example of someone who walked in the obedience of the Lord. According to 2 Chronicles 31:20–21, what were some of the things that brought on his prosperity?

What are four powerful ways that the Holy Spirit helps us to unleash the power of God in our lives (*Breaking the Barriers* pp. 192-197)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

In this session, we've learned three powerful spiritual disciplines that can help us firmly establish the third pillar in our lives, the discipline of the Spirit. We also learned how the Holy Spirit helps us unleash the power of God in our lives.

Questions to consider:

1. Why is prayer such a crucial spiritual discipline?
2. How do you know if the Lord speaks to you or if it is something you are conjuring up on your own?
3. What's the most common way God speaks to you?
4. How does your relationship with the Holy Spirit affect your ability to break barriers?

Applications:

1. Instead of spending your entire morning or afternoon commute listening to music or the radio, try spending fifteen minutes in prayer each day.
2. Begin fine-tuning your spiritual listening skills by reading the Bible, listening to sermons, and picking up what God might be saying to you through that still, small voice.

NOTES:

BREAKING *the* Barriers

By
JASON FRENN

C O N C L U S I O N

You Can Be Who God Wants You to Be!

Breaking the Barriers Conclusion

Now that you've read the book, studied the scriptures, and diligently worked through this workbook, take the necessary time to answer the following questions. This time, answer them from the point of view of someone who has embraced a godly heart, godly wisdom, and godly discipline.

Why am I here?

With God as my partner, *what* can I do to break the barriers?

In what ways am I becoming who I want to be?

Finally, take a few minutes to ask the Lord to speak to you once again by writing a letter. Try not to look at the first letter you wrote in the second session until you have completed this exercise. Remember, this letter is God’s way to encourage you as you endeavor to move beyond all that keeps you stuck!

Letter from God

Dear _____,

Date: _____

Love, God

Once you are finished, feel free to compare your answers and the letter from God with the exercises you completed in the first session. Do you see a significant difference between your initial answers and the ones you wrote in this conclusion?

He is the God who helps you break barriers. He will see you through. His hand will uphold you, and your eyes will see the day of victory. “I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron” (Isa. 45:2 NIV).