



# SOUL SURFER

## LEADER'S GUIDE

FEATURES FAITH-BASED MATERIALS  
FOR CHURCH GROUPS, FAMILIES, AND INDIVIDUALS.





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**SOUL SURFER** Leader's Guide

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# GETTING STARTED

Thank you for choosing the **SOUL SURFER** DVD-based Study. Our prayer is that in the next four weeks, you and your family or group members will be inspired and challenged to deal with areas of loss, tragedy, adversity, or pain by learning to:

- Gain perspective by understanding God's point of view
- Stay positive and keep your faith strong when life gets tough
- Exhibit perseverance in the midst of life's challenges
- Discover the purpose God has for your life

## ***This Kit Is for Your Group If...***

The **SOUL SURFER** DVD-based Study is for your group (or family) if it is composed of:

- 1. Adults and children:** This study is especially designed for groups that include both adults and children. The activities, discussion questions, and scriptures can be understood by participants from elementary school children through adults.
- 2. Adults in a small group:** This study is very effective for adult small groups. Simply skip over the questions and activities that are worded for children. Or you and your group members can make note of the material for children, and share those activities and questions with your own children when you get home.
- 3. Adults in a Sunday school class:** Church-based groups with access to a DVD player can easily do the **SOUL SURFER** study.
- 4. A family:** Parents can use this kit with their children and do a family study. The *Heart of a Soul Surfer* documentary clips and **SOUL SURFER** movie clips are appropriate for children, and the games and activities on the **SOUL SURFER** Resource CD will add to the fun.
- 5. Teens:** **SOUL SURFER** is an excellent study for youth ministries or teen small groups, particularly since the subject of **SOUL SURFER** is a teen! Youth groups will identify with the struggles Bethany faces as she confronts what she's lost because of the attack, and thinks about what her future will hold.

*Note: The **SOUL SURFER** Church Kit features resources specifically for youth leaders, including four customizable sermons, along with games and activities for each weekly session. See [SoulSurferOutreach.com](http://SoulSurferOutreach.com) for more information on the Church Kit.*



# Steps for Success

## 1. Read This Leader's Guide.

The Leader's Guide (which you are holding in your hands) will give you an overview of the **SOUL SURFER** DVD-based Study, as well as instructions for leading discussions with your group or family. The Leader's Guide also includes information on the **SOUL SURFER** films and how you can use them with this study.

## 2. Review the Study Guide.

Briefly review the **SOUL SURFER** Study Guide to become familiar with the format for each week's lesson.

## 3. Decide How to Use the Films.

Films are a powerful way to communicate! They provide lessons rich with motion, beautiful settings, music, and emotion. With its encouraging portrayal of family values and its uplifting message, **SOUL SURFER** is a wonderful combination of faith, film, and family! Seeing the movie as a group is an excellent way to kick off your study. It will add to your discussions and could challenge your group members to see the potential for hope and purpose in their own circumstances.

The *Heart of a Soul Surfer* documentary is also a unique film. It is not only the true story of Bethany's life, faith, and upbringing, it features Bethany herself, along with her family and closest friends. Much of the footage is high-quality video of Bethany as a child, and shortly after the shark attack.

## 4. Communicate With Your Group Members.

Contact your group members to let them know when your meetings will start and what to expect. Determine whether you're going to purchase materials for your members (and have them reimburse you), or whether they will purchase materials on their own, and communicate that process to your members.

Once you begin your sessions, communicate with your members every week—to encourage them, remind them of assignments or weekly goals, and provide prayer and support.

## 5. Pray.

Pray for wisdom in leading the group. Pray for God to inspire and encourage your group, and pray for the specific needs shared by your group members.

## What's in This Kit?

The **SOUL SURFER** DVD-based Study contains a Resource DVD, Resource CD, this Leader's Guide, and a Study Guide. Below, you will find a brief description of each component.



### RESOURCE DVD

The DVD contains the *Heart of a Soul Surfer* documentary, video clips from the documentary for each of the four weekly sessions, the **SOUL SURFER** theatrical trailer, plus some fun extras.

The DVD menu and contents are shown below.

- **SOUL SURFER** Theatrical Trailer
- *Heart of a Soul Surfer* Documentary
- Weekly Video Clips

#### Lesson One

*God, Please Use Me  
Hospital*

#### Lesson Two

*Shark Attack  
One Arm, Now What?*

#### Lesson Three

*First Day of Surfing With One Arm  
Adjusting to One Arm*

#### Lesson Four

*Worldwide Mission Opportunities  
Living in God's Purpose and Plan*

#### Extras

*The Hamilton Family: A Soul Surfer Journey  
Heart of a Soul Surfer Trailer*



## RESOURCE CD

The Resource CD contains game sheets and instructions for the *Paddling Out* activities. These are the warm-up exercises at the beginning of each lesson.

- *Paddling Out* Activity Sheets and Instructions

### Lesson One

*The Line or the Dot? Instructions and Reading*

### Lesson Two

*Disaster Charade Instructions*

*Disaster Charade Game Sheet*

### Lesson Three

*How Do You Persevere? Word Search Instructions*

*How Do You Persevere? Word Search Game Sheet*

### Lesson Four

*Trust Walk Instructions*



## LEADER'S GUIDE

This Leader's Guide includes tips on how to successfully lead a group or family discussion, as well as notes on each of the four **SOUL SURFER** lessons.



## STUDY GUIDE

Use the **SOUL SURFER** Study Guide to lead your discussions. We recommend that each adult and teen in your group or family have their own Study Guide. Having the Study Guide will enable adults and older children to record their answers for the discussion questions, read *The Illustration* section, and individually respond to *The Reflection* questions.



# SOUL SURFER, *the Movie*

**SOUL SURFER** is the inspiring true story of teen surfer Bethany Hamilton, who lost her arm in a shark attack and courageously overcame all odds to become a champion again, through her sheer determination and unwavering faith. The film features an all-star cast, including AnnaSophia Robb and Helen Hunt, with Carrie Underwood in her film debut, and Dennis Quaid. In the wake of this life-changing event that took her arm and nearly her life, Bethany's feisty determination and steadfast faith spur her toward an adventurous comeback that gives her the grit to turn her loss into a gift for others.

## SOUL SURFER *Movie Scenes and Clips*

You can use the movie **SOUL SURFER** to complement this DVD-based Study in three ways:

1. Watch **SOUL SURFER** as a group, before beginning your study. If **SOUL SURFER** is in theaters, go see the movie as a group. If the movie is available on DVD, watch the DVD the week before beginning your four-week **SOUL SURFER** study.

*Note: Retail DVDs are only for use in a home, so if your group is meeting at a house, all you have to do is invite people over. But if you want to show the movie to a group anywhere else (whether it's a church, a school assembly, an outdoor party, or a business), you'll need to get a license. See [OutreachFilms.com](http://OutreachFilms.com) for more information.*

2. Watch the **SOUL SURFER** movie clips online. If you have Internet access, you can watch movie clips from **SOUL SURFER** online at [SoulSurferOutreach.com/clips](http://SoulSurferOutreach.com/clips). If you don't have Internet access during your group meeting, encourage your group members to watch the movie clips before your group session. The **SOUL SURFER** Study Guide references the movie scenes that complement each weekly lesson.

## Heart of a Soul Surfer *Documentary and Clips*

The **SOUL SURFER** DVD-based Study includes the documentary, *Heart of a Soul Surfer*, along with specific clips for each of the four lessons. Interestingly, Bethany's older brother Noah has had a filmmaking hobby since she was a baby, so this

documentary is not made up of re-enactments, but of actual footage of Bethany throughout her life. Below is a description of the documentary.

As Bethany Hamilton relaxed on her board along with her friends waiting for the next wave on October 31, 2003, she was attacked by a shark. The shark took her left arm, but her friends were able to get her a quarter mile back to the shore and summon an ambulance to take her to the hospital.

Before the attack, Bethany was a committed Christian who desired above all else to understand God's purpose and plan for how He wanted her to live her life. When she realized what had happened to her, she prayed for God to help her. While she was still in the hospital, she was already aware that God was answering her prayers; He would use even this loss in His plan to use her for His purposes. Although her dream of being a professional surfer appeared to be finished, she still trusted God to make His purpose clear.

Within three weeks of the attack, Bethany was back in the water, determined to surf again. Six months later, she was competing in the NSSA Nationals and won. Bethany's story has inspired millions around the world with her perseverance and unwavering faith in Jesus Christ's good plan for her life. When asked how she could be so confident that God would use this tragedy, she quotes Romans 8:28: "In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

The story of Bethany Hamilton's experience raises questions about God's perspective on our circumstances, the reason for bad things happening to us, and how to discover God's purpose for our lives. The clips from the documentary enhance the group discussion on these life-changing topics.

Although this documentary features a young teenage girl, people of all ages will find her story inspiring and motivational. There are no scenes in the documentary that re-enact the shark attack, although the discussion of it may be disturbing to young children.

# LEADING A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

## Guidelines for Leaders

### LEADERS INSPIRE.

*Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work. —Nehemiah 2:17–18*

Leaders are critical to the success of any group. Good leaders cast a vision for what the group can do together that they can't do as well on their own. As a small group leader, your enthusiasm and example can inspire your members to:

- Consistently attend group meetings.
- Candidly participate in discussions.
- Take steps of growth and commitment.
- Hold each other accountable.
- Communicate important principles to their families.

So, inspire your group! Those who follow you will rise only as high as the expectations you set, so cast a vision of complete participation. With God's guidance, consistent prayer, and a vision for the success of your group, you may see some amazing growth take place!

### LEADERS FOLLOW GOD.

*David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. —1 Samuel 17:45*

Leading a group can be time-consuming, but be sure to set aside enough quiet time for you to be strengthened and encouraged by God. The foundation for your leadership will come from the peace and wisdom you find in your own relationship with God.



## LEADERS PRAY.

***“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.” —1 Samuel 12:23***

Pray for guidance about who to invite to your group and for God to encourage their participation. Once your group begins, ask for prayer requests and encourage all of your members to pray for each other. God’s mighty hand moves in response to our prayers!

## LEADERS ENCOURAGE.

***In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. —Philippians 1:4-6***

Encourage your members to come to each session, be involved, pray, and complete each section of their Study Guide. And encourage them to be receptive to God continuing His work in them and in their families.

Since **SOUL SURFER** has been designed for use with either adult groups or families, encourage your group members to share the study with their children.

## LEADERS INVITE AND INCLUDE.

***... I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some. —1 Corinthians 9:22***

The **SOUL SURFER** study is intended for both Christians and for those who have not yet entered into a relationship with Christ. Bethany Hamilton’s story has captivated people the world over, and they want to know how she found the strength to continue surfing after losing her arm. Pray for God to bring to your mind the names of people you can invite to your group. Be conscious of how to make your members feel comfortable and welcome at each session. Encourage your members to invite their friends and neighbors to join them in the group.

As you lead each session, be sensitive to personality types (i.e., introvert and extrovert). Gently draw out quieter members by asking non-threatening questions. Talkative members may need to be reminded to allow everyone to participate.

Also, try to be aware of where everyone in your group is in terms of their spiritual growth and maturity. If you have new Christians, or those who are still exploring a relationship with Christ, help them feel comfortable and remember that they are still





learning about the Bible. They will likely need a little extra time to find the location of referenced scriptures. The **SOUL SURFER** Study Guide lists each referenced Bible passage so that group members who are unfamiliar with the Bible can easily follow along.

## **Guidelines for Groups**

Small groups can have an enormous impact on your life and faith. They help you build friendships and provide support, and they offer you a close group of people who can encourage you and hold you accountable for personal and spiritual growth. The guidelines below will establish expectations and help you get the most from your time together. Review these guidelines with your group members or family members before you begin your study.

- **Confidentiality:** Remember that everything shared in your discussions should be considered confidential unless you are given specific permission to share it elsewhere. Confidentiality protects your group (or family) and creates a safe place for support and acceptance for everyone.
- **Openness:** Do your best to be open and honest during discussions. Your transparency will encourage others to be the same.
- **Respect:** Everyone has the right to an opinion. All questions should be encouraged and answered in a courteous manner. Listen attentively to others without interrupting and be slow to judge. Be careful with sentences that start with, “You should...” or, “You ought...” and try to not give advice unless you’re asked.
- **Priority:** Make the small group meeting a priority in your schedule. If you’re unable to attend or are running late, call your group leader.
- **Preparedness:** If your group decides to do portions of the lesson ahead of time, such as the *Checking the Waves* section or reading *The Illustration* before coming to the meeting, prepare your lesson and come ready to share. What you put into the lesson is what you’ll get out of it!
- **Participation:** Participate in the discussion, but keep your answers brief enough that others can share, as well. The principle of participation says, “If there are ten people in the group, share slightly less than one-tenth of the time. If there are eight, share slightly less than one-eighth, etc.”
- **Honesty:** When appropriate, thoughtfully offer suggestions to the leader to improve the study.
- **Connect:** Seek to know and care for other group members, as well as share with transparency your emotional, spiritual, and physical needs.
- **Care:** If a member misses a meeting, be sure someone in the group calls to see how they’re doing and catch them up on what was missed.
- **Support:** Actively support these guidelines and any other goals and values your

group agrees to. Support your leaders and make their job easier by following their directions. Successful groups don't have to agree on every point with one another, but they do agree to disagree sometimes. Refrain from gossip and criticism; if you have concerns or questions about a member's views or statements, communicate directly with that person.

## ***Guidelines for Families or Groups With Children***

All of the guidelines for adult groups apply to groups that include children. In addition, here are a few other considerations:

- **Sequence of questions:** When a children's question is included in the lesson, it is often a good idea to ask that question before having the adults answer their version of the question. Asking the children to respond first gives them a chance to share their insights without feeling like the adults have already given all of the possible answers.
- **Age-appropriate:** Although openness and transparency is always valued in group discussions, be considerate of the younger children in the group. Limit your discussion to topics that are age-appropriate, and be aware of your vocabulary so that it doesn't exclude the children from understanding the conversation.
- **Pace:** Keep the study moving. Be careful not to allow a discussion of one topic to go on too long, and don't let too much time go by without directing a question to the children in the group.
- **Honor:** Treat the younger members of the group with as much honor as the older ones. Ask for their opinions on issues, and value their input and contributions. Children and teens will know if you are patronizing them though, so be genuine!
- **Encouragement:** Participating as equal contributors in a group with adults is a valuable experience for children. Encourage the young people to contribute, and affirm them for their participation. They should experience both spiritual and social growth as a result of being a part of this intergenerational study.

## ***Suggestions for Youth Group Leaders***

All of the guidelines for adult groups also apply to groups made up of teens. Below are some additional suggestions.

- **Group dynamics:** Be particularly aware of group and personal dynamics, such as whether there are teens who tend to be leaders and could help facilitate the discussion. Be sensitive to teens who are new, shy, or might feel left out. If you have more than one group available, try to separate siblings and teens who are dating.



- **Respect and sensitivity:** Encourage the group participants to be respectful and sensitive to each other's feelings. You might want to remind them that what is said in the group stays in the group, and gossip is not acceptable, even if it occurs outside the group.
- **Expressing opinions:** During the group discussion, remind the teens that you're not looking for right or wrong answers. Instead, you're exploring the issues, and hearing a variety of opinions is just part of that process. The ultimate authority, though, is God's Word. The best way to back up an opinion is with a relevant scripture! When your teens give an opinion, challenge them to find a Bible passage that supports their view.
- **Have fun:** The **SOUL SURFER** Church Kit has a Resource CD with four customizable youth messages, plus games and activities. Encourage your senior pastor to do **SOUL SURFER** as a whole church campaign, and ask for the Youth Leader Resource DVD and CD in the Church Kit.

If you don't have the **SOUL SURFER** Church Kit, use the Resource CD in this DVD-based Study, and have your group do the game or activity for each lesson. Or, you can make up your own games!

**Icebreaker Activity Suggestion:** Watch the **SOUL SURFER** movie scene in which Bethany has to relearn how to do everyday tasks, like tying a bikini, preparing breakfast, playing a ukulele—with one hand. Below are some instructions for a group activity based on that scene.

Send two teens (or four if you have more time) out of the room. While they are outside the room, tie one of their arms behind their back and tell them when they return to the group, they will be given a task that they need to accomplish in a certain amount of time.

Before the teen volunteers return, tell the rest of your group that for Person A (choose one of the teens to be Person A, and the other to be Person B), they will all shout out words to encourage the person to keep going. For Person B, they will all shout out words to encourage the person to give up.

Below are some possible tasks for the two volunteers. You can use these or you can make up your own.

- Peel an orange and separate it into sections.
- Give the person a loose pair of pants with a zipper and a button. The person has to put the pants on, zip them up, and button them.
- Give the person a bowl, a cup with water, a tube of toothpaste, and a toothbrush. (Choose a toothbrush with a rounded back.) The person has to brush their teeth.

- Give the person a pair of shoes with laces. (Find a pair that is large enough for most of the teens in your group.) The person has to put the shoes on and lace them up.

At the end, bring up the two (or four) contestants and have them share how everyone's comments affected their ability to accomplish their task.

# STUDY FORMAT AND LENGTH

The **SOUL SURFER** study is organized into sections as described below.

## PRAYER

Open and close each lesson with prayer.



## CHECKING THE WAVES

Group participants may complete the *Checking the Waves* section before or during your study. This section introduces everyone to the lesson topic and helps each person evaluate where they stand on the subject before entering into the group discussion. For example, the *Checking the Waves* section in Lesson Two evaluates what fear-inducing factors tend to put people in the impact zone.

When the lesson is complete, encourage your group members to go back and look at their *Checking the Waves* answers. Did they learn anything new? Did they change any of their views?

## MEMORY VERSE

This study strongly encourages participants not to simply read the Bible, but to commit it to memory. Memorizing Scripture is a fundamental way of developing character and will help make God's Word a natural part of your thoughts and decision-making. Another benefit of memorizing Scripture is that any type of memorization is a learned skill. As you commit Scripture to memory, you are also developing a greater ability to remember things—an asset that will help you in many other areas of life.

Each lesson offers a different verse to memorize. At the end of each week's study, remind everyone to memorize the verse for the following week.



## PADDLING OUT

To get the group engaged, each week's lesson includes an activity that helps introduce the topic and kick off the lesson. **Note:** *The Paddling Out section is optional. You may skip it if you have a limited amount of time. But we encourage you to try this section at least once.* Paddling Out is designed to add to the fun and to help illustrate the principles for the week's lesson.

**LEADER TIP:** Consider giving other group members responsibility for preparing the *Paddling Out* activities each week. Sharing the responsibilities offers others a sense of ownership in the group, and helps their commitment level too!



## THE FILMS

The **SOUL SURFER** Resource DVD contains clips from *Heart of a Soul Surfer*, the documentary about Bethany Hamilton's life. The clips vary in length, but typically run from one to three minutes each. There are two clips per lesson to watch. Prepare for your group meeting by setting up your DVD player and cuing the correct video(s) for playback. The lesson includes instructions as to when to watch each clip and discuss your observations.

In addition, we recommend that you watch scenes from the movie **SOUL SURFER**. The scenes referenced in the **SOUL SURFER** Study Guide are available online. If you don't have Internet access during your group discussion, encourage your group members to watch the movie scenes before your meeting.

## THE DISCUSSION

This will be the main portion of your group meeting each week. Discussion questions are based on the *Heart of a Soul Surfer* clips, on pertinent Scripture passages, and on *The Illustration*.

Most discussion questions include a corresponding question that is specially worded for younger children. Where a children's question has been included, it is often a good idea to ask that question before having the adults answer their version of the question. Asking the children to respond first gives them a chance to share their insights without feeling like the adults have already given all of the possible answers.

## THE ILLUSTRATION

The illustration for each lesson includes a modern-day story or a biblical example. If you need to conserve time, have group members read *The Illustration* beforehand; or preferably read it aloud together during your meeting.



## THE REFLECTION

This section contains several questions that will help group members draw some conclusions about the lesson's teaching and how it applies to their life. Don't skip over this section or treat it lightly. It is in reflection and application that the principles of each lesson gain the power to transform, and transformation is what studying the Bible is all about!

**LEADER'S TIP:** Pair up the group into accountability partners for the four weeks of the study, so they can help each other keep the commitments they make during *The Reflection* segment of the lesson. Accountability partners should be of the same gender and from different families.

## Session Length

Each **SOUL SURFER** lesson is designed to be ninety to one hundred and twenty minutes in length. The length of the session will vary depending on the level of group participation and on how well the discussion stays focused.

You can manage your group by encouraging everyone to participate in the discussions, but also by reminding them to keep their answers brief and allow everyone to contribute. Keep the discussion focused on the topic and on the specific question the group is addressing. Small group meetings are a great time to share conversation and build friendships, and you can arrange for snacks and social time after the group discussion is completed. If the conversation strays to other topics, gently redirect the group back to the Study Guide questions.

If you have less than ninety minutes available for your group, or if the discussion tends to take longer, you can carefully select which questions to cover. As you grow to know each of the participants, you'll have a feel for which questions will most benefit your group.

A decorative border at the top of the page featuring a repeating pattern of yellow hibiscus flowers and green leaves on a light blue background.

## **LEADER'S GUIDE**

The background of the page is an underwater scene with blue water and bubbles. At the bottom, there is a yellow and blue wavy graphic element.

# Lesson Overviews

# LESSON ONE

## Searching for Something Bigger

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Learn the importance of seeing our lives from God's perspective and grow in our ability to seek His will.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

**MOVIE CLIPS:** 2

**God, Please Use Me:** Bethany had two loves in her life from the time she was a little girl: God and surfing. By the time Bethany was thirteen, she not only knew she wanted to be a professional surfer, she also realized she wanted to discover God's purpose for her life. Two weeks before the shark attack, Bethany and her mother began praying in earnest about God's will for her life.

**Hospital:** In the first days after the shark attack, while Bethany was still in the hospital, she explained the reason she might have been bitten by the shark: "So I can tell others about God and help them go to heaven." In this clip, you will also meet her youth pastor, Sarah Hill, who encouraged Bethany with the promises in Jeremiah 29:11.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** 11 (Plus one *Reflection* Question)

**ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS** to consider how seeing their circumstances from God's perspective might enable them to embrace His plans and experience true joy by living them out.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** The documentary clips will give you a glimpse into Bethany's strong faith in the face of very difficult circumstances. This week's *Illustration* will highlight the long-term blessings that came out of Naomi and Ruth's sufferings.

## LESSON TWO

# Trusting God in the Impact Zone

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Learn how to trust God and keep our faith strong in impact zones (places of greatest turmoil, darkest confusion, and most intense upset).

**MEMORY VERSE:** Isaiah 41:13

"For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."

**MOVIE CLIPS:** 2

**Shark Attack:** Bethany and her friends walk us through the events of October 31, 2003: the shark attack, getting back to shore, and heading to the hospital. (Parents Advisory: Although this clip is not graphic or gory, it could be disturbing for younger children. Discretion is advised.)

**One Arm, Now What?** While Bethany looked remarkably upbeat and positive even while still in the hospital, the enormity of what she had lost was sinking in not only for her, but for her friends and family too. Still, it wasn't long before Bethany began to think about giving surfing another shot.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** 11 (Plus one *Reflection* Question)

**ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS** to identify their own fear-induced impact zones and to choose a verse or two to help them keep their faith strong when they face those difficult times.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** The *Checking the Waves* activity will help your group members identify what puts them in an impact zone. Encourage everyone to spend some time on the *Reflection* Question and consider how they can apply this week's lesson. As part of the *Reflection* Question, each person should select one or more verses to remind them of God's character and promises, and to help them keep their faith strong during difficult times.



## LESSON THREE

# Getting Back in the Water

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Discover how to persevere in situations when we are prone to get discouraged or give up and miss out on God's plan for us.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Choose from the following verses or use both of them.

Philippians 3:12 (NCV)

I do not mean that I am already as God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal, but I continue trying to reach it and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that, which is the reason he made me his.

Philippians 4:13

I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

**MOVIE CLIPS:** 2

**First Day of Surfing With One Arm:** Although she was under strict orders to stay out of the water until her wound was healed, Bethany was unable to wait another day to get back to surfing. Getting back to surfing was a turning point in Bethany's recovery.

**Adjusting to One Arm:** As she recovered from the shark attack, Bethany had to face the reality of her losses and relearn even simple, everyday tasks. In addition, Bethany had to consider her uncertain future and deal with the feeling that she was no longer "normal" or beautiful.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** 12 (Plus one *Reflection* Question)

**ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS.** You may have group members, guests, or children who do not yet know the Lord. Use this lesson as an opportunity to let everyone know they can talk to you about what it means to have a relationship with God. If you don't feel qualified to lead someone to Christ, think through who at your church might be able to help, or pray for God to give you the words and wisdom to respond to questions.

**SPECIAL NOTES:** After using the *Checking the Waves* self-evaluation of things that might discourage us, encourage group members to talk to God about how to persevere toward overcoming the areas they identified. They might find it helpful to compare the *Checking the Waves* list with things that could have discouraged Bethany or Bill Porter. (His story is in *The Illustration*.) Help the group see that perseverance and seeing life from God's perspective can move us from giving up to living in the midst of God's plan for us.

## LESSON FOUR

# Catching the Ride of Your Life

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Learn how we can discover God's calling and purpose for our lives. We will also see how the Bible shows us God's will, and instructs us on how He wants us to live while we are still on this side of heaven.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**MOVIE CLIPS:** 2

**Worldwide Mission Opportunities:** Bethany goes to Thailand on a mission trip sponsored by World Vision. When she sees the suffering caused by the recent tsunami, it draws her compassion and gives her a different perspective of her own trials. Bethany uses her experiences and love for the ocean to encourage the children to get back in the water.

**Living in God's Purpose and Plan:** The news coverage of Bethany's story gains her worldwide attention. Making speeches and giving interviews in places where there are no waves is definitely outside of Bethany's comfort zone, but she sees it as a chance to give people hope for their lives and for eternity. She quotes our Memory Verse, Romans 8:28, as the reason God let all this happen to her, calling the attack a "blessing in disguise."

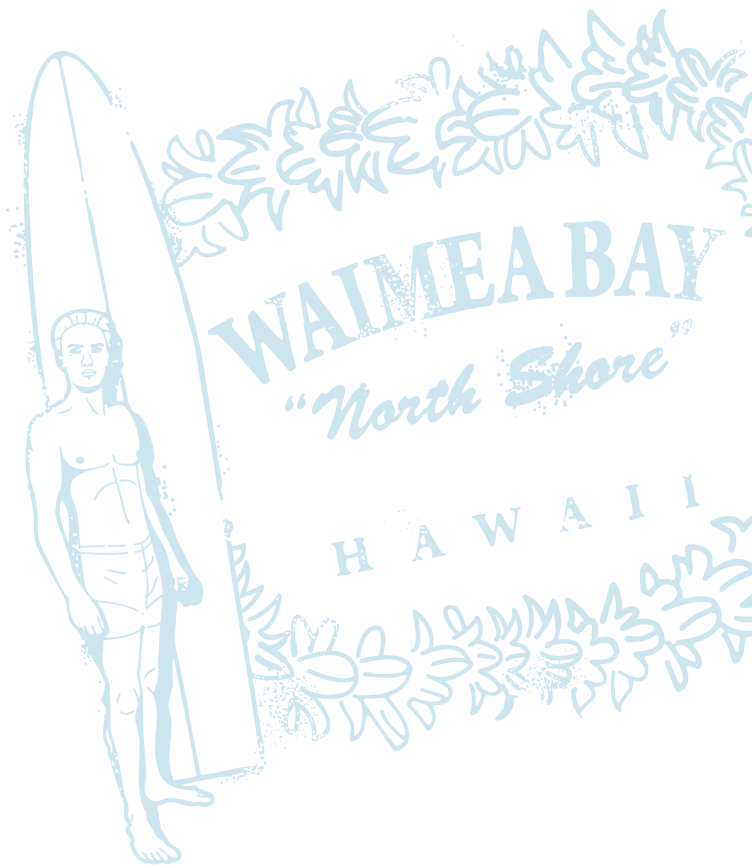
**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** 12 (Plus one *Reflection* Question)

**ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS.** People talk about discovering God's plan for their life; but most people just don't know how to do that. This week's *Checking the Waves* activity says, "... revelation of our purpose is not an event, but a process of eight phases of discovery that God takes us through." Point out to your group members that being anchored in a personal relationship with God—grounded in His Word and in prayer—are essential to hearing and understanding His purpose for our lives.

**SPECIAL NOTES:**

In Questions 3–5, you will read and discuss the 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 teaching on God’s comfort and how we can extend that comfort to others.

Consider applying this lesson by talking with your group about doing a service project together. A first step could be contacting your church or an outreach organization like a local soup kitchen ministry, food bank, homeless outreach, outreach to underprivileged children, etc. Many churches provide opportunities for short-term mission trips; this might be a good topic of discussion for your group. Maybe someone in your group would like to research some opportunities and share what they find at a follow-up meeting or through e-mail during the week.





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