

# LESSON ONE: A Broken Bridge

## Read

Read the Introduction of TWELVE INCHES, John 10 and Acts 10:23-26

## Review

In the introduction of this book, I talk about the moment I realized that I was living a very mediocre faith life. I was checking boxes instead of experiencing God. And as the Barna Group survey of 2006 shows, I was not alone. Many of us are fooled into believing that religion equals relationship and therefore we settle for existing instead of living.

We have also found out that the early church did not settle for less than full abundance. As we read in Acts 10, the apostles' testimony was so powerful that many of the new believers mistakenly worshipped as gods. Because we have the same Holy Spirit within us as believers, we must believe that we can attain the same power, if only we find the route to the abundant life.

## Reflection

*"It seems as if many of us have never possessed that pivotal evidence of abundance and divine power. I firmly believe that the reason we don't is because we are missing an important faith-walk connection. And for Heaven's and our own sake, we need it. Badly. We must learn how to stun the world with our faith." Introduction, p. XX.*

This quote follows the illustration about the Christians of the first century who were perceived almost as super-heroes, so strong was their testimony and works. This book is a result of my realization that there had to be more to the Christian life than what I was living. Could you relate to my testimony? If so, Jot down some of the responses you have had to life's circumstances that show that you struggle to keep a strong connection between what you know about your God and your feelings.

# Discussion

1. Read the entire verse of John 10:10: “The thief comes only to steal and destroy; I came that you have life, **and have it abundantly.**”

It is evident how the devil (the thief) is acting rampantly in our world, destroying lives and families. We can easily believe that. But how about the second part of this verse, which does not refer only to salvation, but to the fact that Jesus’ mission was also so give us all the tools we need to live an abundant life? Discuss or meditate upon the true impact of this truth. How can it change the way we see our trials? Jot down your thoughts:

2. As you read John 10, you find Jesus talking to the Pharisees about his position as Son of God, and the Shepherd for His sheep (you and I). He says: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” John 10:27-29

- How does Jesus relate listening to his voice and following Him to the abundant life He promised on John 10:10?
- If you were to take inventory of your spiritual life, would you say that you listen to Jesus’ voice and follow Him as an obedient sheep? If not, can you identify some areas where you struggle to obey him? Write them down.

3. Write down the spiritual weaknesses that you can identify in your life, which prevent you from having strong faith. *For example: “I have a hard time believing that God will provide for my financial needs”*

4. Think about a time in your life where you experienced God in a powerful, tangible way. Then list what was going on in your life in the following areas:
  - a. Time alone with God:
  - b. Time in His Word:
  - c. Commitment to purity:
  - d. Your relationships:
  - e. Obedience to His commands and promptings:

## ACTION

Think about the things that make it hard for you to keep strong faith. It could be a false belief about yourself, God or others. It could be a habit that you know is not honorable or healthy for your physical or spiritual wellbeing. It could be your past. As you look at the weaknesses that you wrote down on item 3 above, write a prayer, confessing your weaknesses and asking God to open your spiritual eyes for the next chapters, that you may be able to identify those strongholds that need to be broken. If you are doing this reflection in a group setting, it may be a good time to ask for prayers and accountability.