



Permission Granted

Focus Sin in our lives opens the door to bondage to the Enemy. God allows this bondage so that we will cry out to Him and return to Him.

Fun What is your most prized possession? Why?

Review Key Scriptures: Luke 22:31–32; Job 1:6–12; I Kings 22:7–8, 15–19

Pride is the most common way that Christians open the door to being held captive by our Enemy, the devil.

- *Pride is trusting in your own strength.*

Jesus' disciple Peter claimed he would never deny Jesus, rebuked Jesus and cut off a man's ear, all because he relied on his own strength. God allowed Peter to be "sifted" by Satan so pride would not destroy Peter. (Mark 14:27–31, Matthew 16:21–23, I Corinthians 10:12)

- *Pride is trusting in your own righteousness.*

God granted Satan permission to come against Job because Job was righteous in his own eyes. Like Job, mature believers are vulnerable to this trap when we begin to measure our righteousness by what we do, and not by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. (Job 1:6–12, 32:1–2; 33:8–9, 36:3, Job 38)

- *Pride is trusting in your own wisdom.*

King Ahab didn't want to obey God, so he only listened to prophets who told him what he wanted to hear. Even when a truthful prophet tried to warn him, Ahab refused to listen. Ultimately, he was destroyed. (2 Kings 21:1–6; I Kings 22:20–23; James 3:14–15)

Group Dynamics Idea Each week, have a different group member tell their story of how they came to Christ, an answered prayer or a Scripture that has helped them that week.

- Discuss**
1. Which of the three stories from the Bible spoke to you the most—Peter, Job or Ahab? Why?
 2. What are some ways we might rely on our own strength without even realizing it? How does our culture encourage us to trust in our own strength?
 3. Did you learn anything new from the story of Job? Have someone read Job chapter 38 out loud to the group.
 4. Have you ever been tempted like King Ahab to ignore wise advice that you didn't want to hear? Tell the story to the group.
 5. God is in control and will use the enemy to fulfill His purposes as He did with Peter, Job and Ahab. Why is it difficult to remember that God is in control when we are in the middle of a battle?

- Take Home**
- As we conclude, remember the following:
- We open the door to Satan's attack when we fall into pride.
 - Pride is trusting in our own strength, our own righteousness, and our own wisdom.
 - When we are prideful, God grants Satan permission to put us into bondage so that we repent and return to God. He does this because He loves us and doesn't want us to be destroyed by pride.

Pray Pray for the needs of the group.

New Leader Tip The group will sometimes wander off of the topic you are discussing. That's OK and sometimes leads to an even better discussion! As the leader, it's up to you to bring it back on track. You can do this many different ways as long as it honors the group members. They will appreciate the fact that you are helping everyone stay focused.