

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS

MEGAN FATE MARSHMAN



THE **ADVENTURE** OF TRUSTING GOD
& HIS PLANS FOR YOU

MEANT FOR GOOD

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& HIS PLANS FOR YOU

SIX-SESSION STUDY GUIDE

BY MEGAN FATE MARSHMAN

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Meant for Good Study Guide

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READ THIS FIRST

THE GOSPEL

In the beginning, God created everything. He created humanity to share and enjoy His love. But something went wrong.

Although humankind had a beautiful, intimate relationship with God, humanity chose to rebel—something we still choose to do to this day. They broke their relationship with God and earned a consequence called “death.” Death simply means separation. When they sinned, their spirits died—they were separated from God. It wasn’t just them. We *all* have one thing in common: we all fall short and need a savior (Romans 3:23).

The only one who lives up to God’s perfect standard is *God*, so *God* sent Himself. Jesus—fully God and fully man—came to earth and lived a perfect life, thereby earning a perfect relationship with His heavenly Father. We earned separation, but He didn’t give us what we earned because of His love. The love He *demonstrated* by dying on the cross for us (Romans 5:8).

Why did Jesus have to die? If He didn’t, our “falling short” would’ve resulted in us being forever separated from God, even after death. The consequence for our sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus (Romans 6:23). One day, we’ll all die physically. But this also refers to spiritual death. We deserve eternal separation from God.

But . . . the story doesn’t end there. God doesn’t force us to pay the ultimate debt of our life. He pays it Himself with the sacrifice and gift of Jesus’ life.

Why did Jesus have to die? His death is in place of *our* death. Our consequence for falling short was put on Him, and He was killed in our place. But the gift keeps giving. Jesus rose from the grave and defeated death and lives forever at God’s side. *Now*, you and I can receive the gift of a restored perfect relationship with God. We earned separation from God, *but* Jesus offers us forever life with Him instead. We are not capable of overcoming death, but death is the only payment to bring restoration to our relationship with God. Jesus paid the price

and overcame the consequence on our behalf. All we must do is acknowledge we are sinners, surrender our lives to His lordship, and believe that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9). Then we can be forgiven for our sins, receive His gracious gift, and step into the restored life Jesus offers. Everything in this study is built on this amazing gospel truth.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I don't like being disappointed.

Every disappointment, trivial or tragic, is the result of unmet expectations. Therefore, our expectations as we approach this study matter.

Here are my expectations: I want the you who finishes this study to be different than the you who started it. I want you to go beyond what you know and feel and start seeing what God has in store for you, and trust Him with all you've got. The difference between head-knowledge and the real depth of what God has for us is the difference between a mud puddle and the Pacific Ocean. It's huge.

In large part, we'll be studying Jeremiah 29:11–14. While everyone loves Jeremiah 29:11, we will be reminded why the chapter doesn't end there. There's so much more to unpack in the verses after verse 11—truth you need in your life today! How do I know? Because I have needed these truths in my own life.

I run into people all the time who disclose to me, “I'm just *trying* to trust God right now,” and I wonder if they know what it practically looks like to trust Him. Our definition of “trust” can be a bit cloudy. Are they trusting, or are they hanging onto the hope that their life is going to work out the way they want it to? That's not trust—that's just a bunch of expectations ready to be unmet. That's an exercise in being disappointed, not in trusting God.

Lucky for us, Jeremiah wrote verses 12–14 to teach the Israelites precisely *how* to trust God. Does actively and consistently trusting God sound overwhelming? Let me simplify. If you want to draw closer to God, you're in the right place. If you're here to seek God, you won't be disappointed with what you find. Not because of my words on these pages, but because God promises you'll find Him if you do (Jeremiah 29:13). And once you find Him, you'll have everything you need.



WHAT'S THIS STUDY ALL ABOUT?

Spiritual growth is the way God forms us more into the likeness of His Son, Jesus. This study is all about God's plans to reach the world, your neighborhood, and even your family. And, guess what? His plans involve you. The process of discovering your part in God's plans require a Christ-centered community and a submission to His Spirit as He forms you more into the likeness of Jesus. This process is not gathering information, it's submitting your plans for His. As you discover what God is doing in you and learn to say "Yes!" to His leading, you'll be empowered to live the life of purpose you were created for. Get ready for an adventure. God's plans are meant for good . . . and His good plans involve you.

..... GATHER (GROUP STUDY)

The group gatherings are intended to be 90 minutes of connection with each other and God.

► *PREPARE!*

This section has a few quick activities to help you check in with yourself **before** you show up to your gathering. Do it any time the day of or in the car outside of your gathering.

► *HEAR FROM MEGAN—VIDEO*

Each session is kicked off with a video teaching from Megan. Follow the video outline and take notes if you like.

► *GROUP DISCUSSION*

The greatest growth is found in group discussion where we share our experiences, perspectives, questions, and encouragement. There will be prompts to read and corresponding questions to explore each session's teaching further.

..... STUDY & SEEK (PERSONAL STUDY)

Study & Seek is the personal study component of the *Meant for Good* Study Guide. These exercises are designed to take you into relevant Scripture where you can grow with God's leading in specific and personal ways. Go at your own pace doing a little each day or do it all at once.

▶ *WALK IN STEP*

These personal study exercises will have you engage with a passage of Scripture and commentary taking Megan's teaching one step deeper. Each exercise is intentional and encourages willingness to experience change and growth—the goal is always to become more like Jesus and to trust God's plan more completely.

▶ *LIVE LIKE CHRIST*

Discover action steps to help you apply what God has been doing in your heart to your everyday life.

LEADER'S NOTE:

Make sure you check out the Leader's Guide in the back of this book to help you prepare for each group gathering.

Encourage your participants to make use of the blank pages for notes in the back of this guide.

1
SESSION

GOD'S **PLANS**
ARE MEANT FOR
GOOD

G A T H E R

Group Study

PREPARE!

Before you show up to your gathering, check in with yourself.

1 THE TITLE OF TODAY IS: _____

Title your day as if it were a chapter title in the book of your life. Be creative and not hasty. Think about the entire day or week you've had, not just the past hour.

2 YOUR MOOD: Circle all that apply.



3 ENERGY LEVEL: Mark along the line.



4 I AM THANKFUL FOR:

5 MY HEART FEELS HEAVY BECAUSE:

1 MY ONE-WORD PRAYER FOR TODAY: _____

Write out one word or sentence that could encapsulate a lot of what you are hoping to hear or discover today with God's help.

“TELL ME, WHAT
IS IT YOU **PLAN** TO
DO WITH YOUR
ONE WILD AND
PRECIOUS LIFE.”

—MARY OLIVER



GATHERING TRANSITION TIME (10 minutes)

► **RELEVANT VERSES:**

JEREMIAH 29:11-14

ROMANS 8:28-29

WHO ARE YOU & WHY ARE YOU HERE?

Take 3 minutes to fill in the following questions.

Name: _____

1. Where did you grow up? _____

2. What is your go-to karaoke song? _____

3. What is your favorite room in your home? _____

4. What is the most impactful book you've read lately? _____

Using only three words, answer this:

Why are you here today?

Go around the room taking turns introducing yourself and sharing your 3 words to the group before you begin the teaching video.

SESSION 1 VIDEO (17 minutes)

Let's watch the video for this session and feel free to take notes below.

► **NOTES:**

God can and will be found when you search for Him with all your heart.

Everything God does is meant for good

God defines good differently than we define good.

God's good plans are not exempt from trial.

Rather than saving you from trials, God wants to transform you *through* them.

Your past will either be Satan's weapon against you or God's most powerful tool.

WHAT'S GOD SAYING? (3 Minutes)

Take a minute on your own to look over your notes and write down what stands out, resonates, or challenges you most. Then have one or two people briefly share.

“TO **WALK OUT**
OF HIS WILL IS
TO WALK INTO
NOWHERE.”

—C.S. LEWIS

..... THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

(5 Minutes)

Pick one person to read aloud to the group before you begin group discussion.

UNDERSTANDING ROMANS

When the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the church in Rome, trust in Jesus was sweeping across the Roman Empire, but with that trust came heavy oppression (and at times even death). So, it would have been pretty surprising for Paul to write that God is working out *all* things for the good. What good could possibly come out of these awful circumstances??

Paul is encouraging those trusting in Jesus to have a different perspective and approach to life, no matter how difficult life can be. This is why in the next verse, Paul tells us what he means by “good”: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters” (Romans 8:29). God’s good plan for us is to form us more into the likeness of Jesus. The “good” God has for you is to transform you into the image of His Son so that you can partner with Him in the restoration of all things. His plans for our lives are so much bigger and better than ours.

In our **GROUP DISCUSSION**, we are going to explore four approaches to trusting God’s good plan.

GROUP DISCUSSION (30-40 Minutes)

Leader, read each numbered prompt out loud and ask the corresponding discussion question.

1

WE KNOW GOD WORKS

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. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.—Romans 8:28-29

- How is Paul's definition of "good" in Romans 8:29 (to be conformed to the image of his Son) different than the cultural definition of good?

2

ALL THINGS FOR GOOD

God can use "all things" to further His good plans. He can use "all things" to conform us more into the image of His Son so we can partner with Him in the restoration of all things. God's plans for our lives are so much bigger and better than ours.

- As you consider God using "all things" in your life for good, which part of your life comes to mind?
- What part of your life might God be wanting to use for good?

GOD'S PLANS ARE MEANT FOR GOOD

3

TO BE CONFORMED

Spiritual formation is the process by which Christ is formed in us. It's not solely about gathering information although information is part of the necessary fertilizer that allows spiritual formation to take root. Spiritual formation is also not defined by what we do or don't do. Rather, it depends upon what *Christ is doing in us*. To be conformed to the image of Christ, we must discover truth *and* be willing to submit our plans to God's plans. The appropriate response is not gripping harder and trying to control areas of our lives, it's opening up our hands in submission.

- **How might Jesus be inviting you to open your hands and submit control of an area of your life to Him?**
- **How specifically might Jesus be inviting you to open your hands and submit control to Him?**

"...BE CONFORMED
TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON..."

4

TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON

God can use all things "to conform us to the image of His Son." He can use our talents, our roles, our relationships, and even our trials for His glory and our good. God doesn't remove us *from* trials, He transforms us *through* them. "All things" can be meant for good.

- **How might God be wanting to use the very things you're going through to conform you more into the likeness of Jesus?**
- **What could be your next best step?**
- **And how can we help?**



RECEIVE BLESSING

(5 Minutes)

Leader, have everyone sit with hands open, palms up. Read the following blessing over your group before closing in prayer.

May you find all confidence in God's plan and
promise to make you more like Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 Minutes)

Encourage the group to engage the personal study material throughout the week before your next gathering. Pray in whichever way best suits your group, and use this space to keep track of prayer requests and praises. Dismiss!

1
SESSION

GOD'S **PLANS**
ARE MEANT FOR
GOOD

STUDY AND SEEK

Personal Study

WALK IN STEP

THE MAIN CHARACTER

When studying scripture, it is important to recognize we are not the main character, God is. First and foremost, the Bible is the story of a radically loving God chasing tirelessly after those He created. So, as you approach these **Walk in Step** sections, look for what they reveal about who He is first. This will help you in joining Him where He is going, rather than trying to get Him to help *you* with where *you* want to go.

Read the following passage three times:

MARK 4:35-41

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Next, write down 30 OBSERVATIONS about the passage and what you notice in the chart.

30 OBSERVATIONS

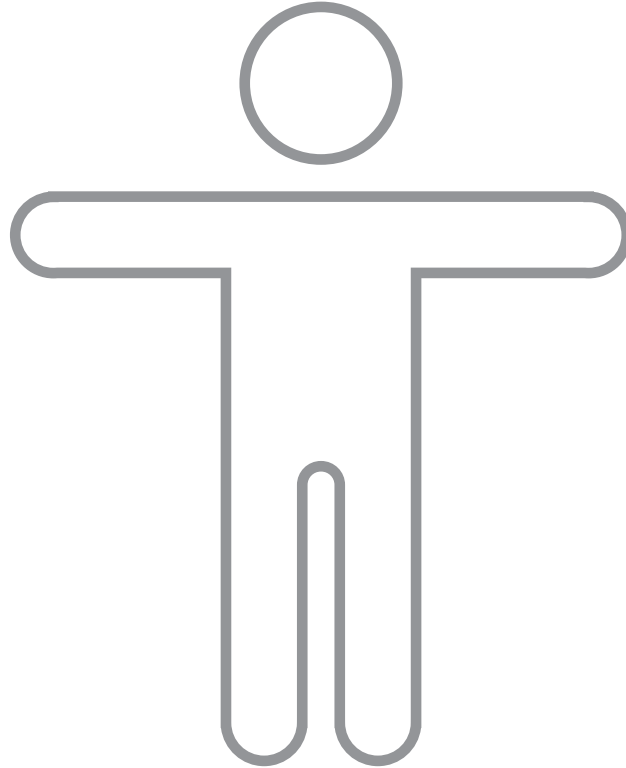
1. _____	16. _____
2. _____	17. _____
3. _____	18. _____
4. _____	19. _____
5. _____	20. _____
So far so good!	Crushing it!
6. _____	21. _____
7. _____	22. _____
8. _____	23. _____
9. _____	24. _____
10. _____	25. _____
Now you're rolling!	You go this!
11. _____	26. _____
12. _____	27. _____
13. _____	28. _____
14. _____	29. _____
15. _____	30. _____
Half way there!	Told you it was possible!

Circle the three most significant observations to you. Based on your observations, write what you think God is saying to you through this passage in a single line:

► MINDFULNESS

God meets us precisely where we are. It's important we approach His truth being honest about where we are. Spend a few minutes becoming mindful of your body, mind, and spirit.

As you become aware of each part of your body, slowly shade in the outline. Further darken the areas of pain, soreness, discomfort, or exhaustion.



What three things are weighing heaviest on your mind today? Write them here.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

► TRUTH IS . . .

Read the truth statements below and circle the **3** that feel most difficult to fully believe right now.

I AM JOHN 1:12 GOD'S CHILD	I AM 1 PETER 2:9 VALUABLE	I WAS GENESIS 1:31 CREATED GOOD
I AM PSALM 1:9 SAFE WITH HIM	I AM JOSHUA 1:9 STRONG IN HIM	I AM PSALM 46:5 ABLE WITH HIM
	I AM ROMANS 5:8 LOVED	I AM PSALM 139:14 BEAUTIFUL
I AM PROVERBS 31:10 CHOSEN	I AM PSALM 16:8 SECURE WITH HIM	I HAVE EPHESIANS 2:10 PURPOSE

Look up the verse associated to each of the three truths most difficult to believe right now. Write out each verse and as you do, invite God to help you fully trust Him at His word.

TRUTH 1:

TRUTH 2:

TRUTH 3:

PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

▶ HOW DO YOU NEED GOD TO BE YOUR SHEPHERD TODAY?

Notice, Psalm 23 is more about Who God is than who we are. Using the guided outline below, write out your own personal psalm acknowledging who God is, what He does, and how you plan to trust Him precisely where you're at in response.

The LORD is _____

He _____

He _____

He _____

Even though I _____

I will _____

for you are _____

You have _____

You have _____

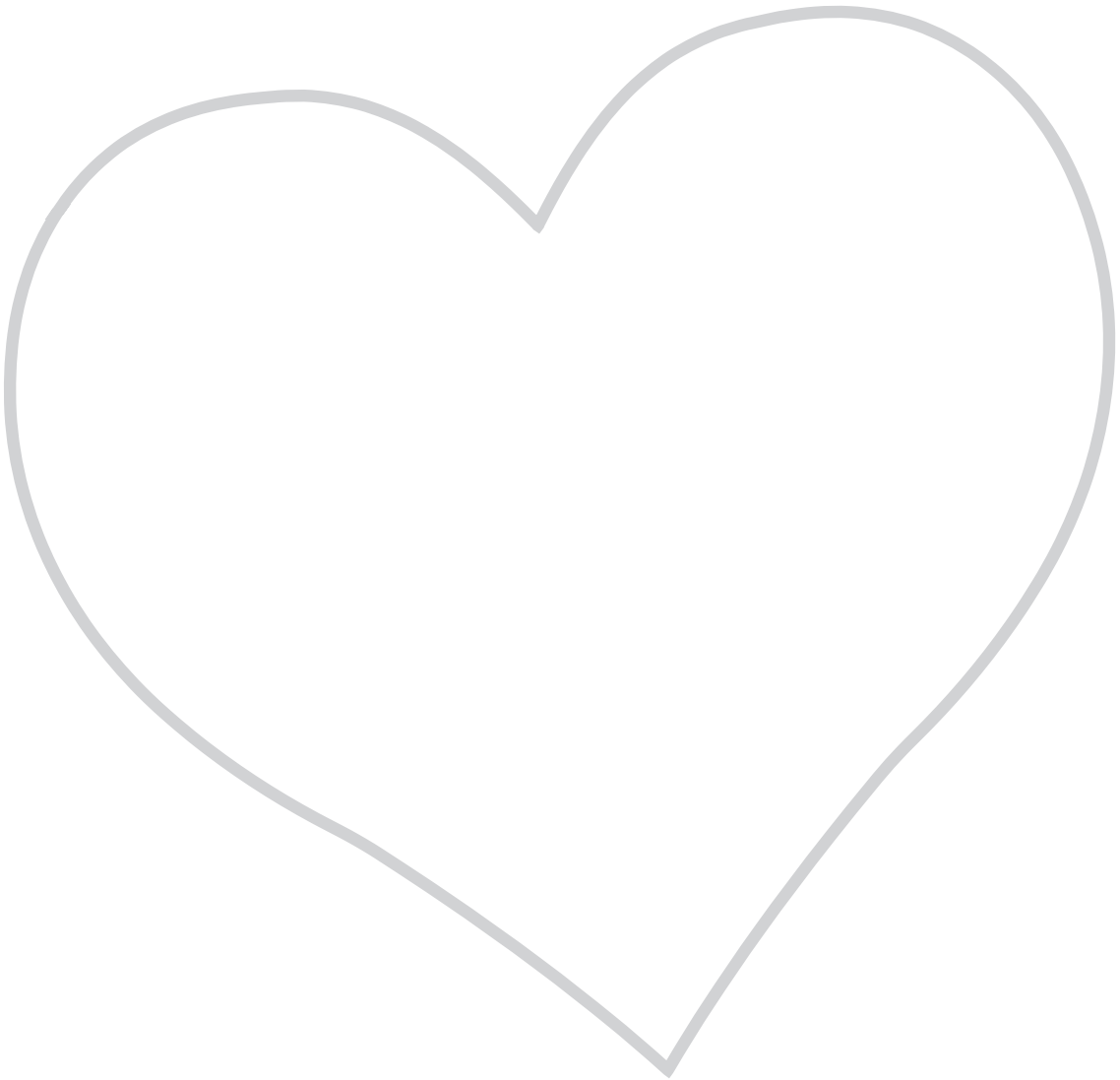
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

LIVE LIKE CHRIST

PIE CHART:

Create a pie chart in the heart below based on what is consuming the most space in your heart. Label each piece of your chart to better see what you are trusting in right now.

► *Some areas of trust may be yourself, a job/career, wealth, romantic relationship, friends, health, fitness, education, intelligence, accomplishments, etc.*



ACTION STEPS

Based on your chart, write down three action steps you want to pursue in the next week that you believe will help shift the focus of your heart more toward God.

ACTION STEP 1:

ACTION STEP 2:

ACTION STEP 3:



MEANT FOR GOOD

by Megan Fate Marshman

Meant for Good is a power-packed, biblical look at the truth that you really can trust God's plan for your life—no matter what your life looks like right now. Dynamic Bible teacher Megan Fate Marshman will help you discover how to stop discounting yourself from a hopeful future, start living in active dependence on God, and find your way to the perfect plan He has for you.

With authenticity and revelatory insights into the character of Jesus, Megan shares an engaging and fresh look at the core themes within the well-loved scripture of Jeremiah 29:11-14. Through winsome and inspiring stories, *Meant for Good* will show you how to trust God in your daily life, and more importantly, how to trust God's definition of good above your own.

[LEARN MORE](#)