

*The* **Cup**  
*and the*  
**Glory**

**Study Guide**

Lessons on  
Suffering and  
the Glory of God

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*Kress Christian*  
PUBLICATIONS

*The Cup and the Glory Study Guide*

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Published by:

***Kress Christian***  
**PUBLICATIONS**

P.O. Box 132228

The Woodlands, TX 77393

[www.kresschristianpublications.com](http://www.kresschristianpublications.com)

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ISBN 1-934952-00-1

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## *Introduction*

# *How to Use the Study Guide*

The study guide is designed for use by individuals or for use by small groups. In my travel and correspondence I have noticed the wide variety that exists of good (or bad) commentaries available to people. In several places around the world Christians have only their Bible and nothing else. Several others have one to three Christian books. Some have rather large personal libraries and electronic media available to them.

So how do I set up a study guide for those with such a vast discrepancy in what is available to them? I have tried to make this study to be “Word driven,” that is, from the Scriptures so that with the help of the book, people will be able to follow along. *The Cup and the Glory* is only as good as it is biblically accurate. If there is any comfort and encouragement, it is because God uses His Word. I use *The Cup and the Glory* as one of the textbooks in the prayer class that I teach at The Master’s Seminary, but truthfully, the only one sure text we have is the Word of God.

Even though I use the book as a textbook, I rarely read from it in class; instead we focus more on the biblical texts that were referenced in the book. The same will be true for this study guide. It is not so much trying to bring out gold nuggets from the book, but rather that the book will point to gold nuggets in the Word.

For those who do not have any other sources available, *The MacArthur Study Bible* would be the one resource I recommend as a beginning point. Obviously, if you have access to them, *The MacArthur Commentary Series* would contain much more material.

The format of the study guide for each chapter is as follows:

1. **Scripture References:** These refer to the broader context that you can read to get the flow of the Bible verses. The specific references will be given also.
2. **Reading Assignments:** These will generally be the assignments from *The Cup and the Glory*. This is a reminder that the questions should be considered after reading the chapters or the entire book. In fact, many of the questions will make no sense unless one has read the chapters.
3. **Questions from *The Cup and the Glory*:** These will be given with page numbers, which will be useful in either reviewing or contemplating important points.
4. **Questions from the Word:** These will be primarily from the highlighted text with some of the other Scripture passages cited.

5. **The Heart of the Matter:** These will pinpoint the significance or “make sure you understand this” points of the chapter. If you missed these, you may go back to the previous sections and find the answers.
6. **Personal Application Section:** This is to be used first for yourself and then in ministering to others. As you will see, this will be set up with many of your own interactions with God and His Word.
7. **Deeper Walk Study:** This section takes a little longer. No classes, message series, or books can ever deplete the supply of gold nuggets in God’s Word. This section is for those who want to follow the “where do I go from here” for additional biblical truths that one can research. As before, this is set up primarily so that one can do this entirely from the Bible. Of course, any good, solid commentary will enhance your study.

*Just a quick note:* I did not select any daily reading section for the study guide. I realize that *The Cup and the Glory* is meat—not milk. I have heard from many people who tell me that they have to stop and read a sentence, paragraph, page or chapter over and over and meditate on it. Sometimes it is a matter of conviction that God is doing in their lives as Christians. I do not want to hinder any such work of the Spirit. I would rather God do the timing. For those who want to do daily reading, you may divide the material according to your own pace.

I very much hope this will be a fruitful study unto the Glory of God.

To God be the Glory!

Greg Harris  
July 2007  
The Master’s Seminary

P.S. Oh, yes, I almost forgot; I didn’t mention my “price” for this study guide. There is no profit for me in writing this work; even the printed edition is done virtually at cost. My price is that you will please pray for me and pass the book and the study guide on to someone you think would benefit from them. It is a ministry, not a business.

## Chapter One

# The Wilderness

Because most of “The Wilderness” is my personal testimony, this chapter differs from the others. This chapter contains more personal references and much less Scripture than the rest of the book; however, there are still matters to consider.

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Key passages used in this chapter include: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Colossians 2:1; 1 Peter 5:10.

### READING ASSIGNMENTS

Read chapter one “The Wilderness” before attempting to answer any of the following questions.

### QUESTIONS FROM *THE CUP AND THE GLORY*

1. According to the book, how does the author define “the wilderness” (pp. 14-15)?

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2. How did the wilderness change his prayer life (pp. 15-17)? Why?

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3. Why was 1 Peter 5:10 so difficult for Greg Harris to read? Why did he not want to preach this passage when he was asked (p. 18)?

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### QUESTIONS FROM THE WORD

1. Why would Paul end 1 Thessalonians 4 with the command to “comfort one another with these words?” What comfort did God intend for the Thessalonians? How is this comforting?

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2. What can we learn about Paul and his prayer life in Colossians 2:1 (p. 15)? How does this broaden your understanding of how difficult prayer can be? Explain.

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3. First Peter 5:10 will be an important verse in the study and will be examined in an upcoming chapter. What are some of the biblical truths taken from this verse? List Who promises, what He promises and when He promises them.

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### THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Even though this is a different chapter from the others, there are still central points to identify. Remember, this section is primarily for review to ensure that you thoroughly understand these points:

1. Having defined the wilderness as “that baffling condition of going from spiritual light into spiritual darkness” (pp. 14-15), it is crucial that one is walking with God when this condition occurs. How does someone in this situation differ from those who have the ramifications of some specific sin they had committed (such as the sin of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11)? Explain.

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3. The “Prosperity Gospel” teaches that God wants you to be healthy, wealthy and happy; and if you are not, then it is due to some sin in your life. Explain how the testimony and the Scripture dispute this?

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### PERSONAL APPLICATION SECTION

1. Was the 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 passage appropriate to end the twins’ letter? Why or why not (p. 11)?

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2. When would it be appropriate to use the passage to comfort someone? When would it be inappropriate? Explain.

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3. Write your own personal application question from this chapter (in other words, “what have I learned”) that was not asked elsewhere and give the answer to your question.

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### DEEPER WALK STUDY

For those who want to research additional related Scripture and topics, consider the following:

1. How does the Book of Numbers being entitled “In the Wilderness” in the Hebrew text change your understanding of what the book teaches? Explain.

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2. Read the book of Numbers, or at least start with Numbers chapter 9, and trace the people's repeated disobedience and the judgments of God. Pay careful attention to chapters 13–14 because their rebellion had severe consequences for them.

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3. Notice the difference between God leading someone into the wilderness who is walking with God (p. 17) versus the nation of Israel being in the wilderness as consequences of their own sinfulness and rebellion. What are the similarities between the two conditions? What are the differences? Explain.

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## *Chapter Two*

# *The Cup*

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Key passages used in this chapter include: Mark 9-10 (broader text); Matthew 16-19 (parallel text); Mark 9:1-10; 10:35-41 (specific text).

### READING ASSIGNMENTS

Read chapter two “The Cup” before attempting to answer any of the following questions.

### QUESTIONS FROM *THE CUP AND THE GLORY*

1. Although James and John are often criticized regarding their request of Jesus, what are some of the other important matters to consider about what they had asked (pp. 20-22)? Explain the significance.

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2. What did the rich young ruler seek from Jesus? How did Jesus’ answer demonstrate that the man had by no means kept all the commandments all his life (pp. 25-27)?

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3. How does the apostles’ astonishment at what Jesus taught regarding riches show how they defined being blessed by God (pp. 27-28)?

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4. Based on what had already happened and what Jesus had already taught, why was the request of James and John a logical one (pp. 29-31)?

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5. Jesus asked if James and John were able to drink the cup. What are some of the possible elements of drinking the cup (pp. 33-35)?

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*Y*ou will find, however, suffering changes the scope of your prayer life. It causes you to reexamine the content of what you ask, especially when contrasted with the pleasant junctures of your Christian walk. This does not mean you are wrong in asking God for things, but you will find suffering cultivates a different mentality regarding what you ask. Your prayers are not the same when you are looking up from the pit. In fact, an aspect of suffering occurs when God does not grant many of the requests we bring to Him, at least not in a way we expect or even appreciate. Intense and prolonged suffering forces you to address in your own life the simple yet profound questions, “What do you want from Jesus? What do you want from God?” The questions are not as easy as they sound—and the answer is even more difficult. If you pray for a deeper walk with Jesus or deeper blessings in the spiritual realm—and really mean it—how God answers these prayers precious to Him may surprise you. It will most assuredly stretch your faith. Answered prayers of a deeper walk or deeper blessings are not so much a matter of God giving these to us as much as it is for Him to bring us to the point where we can receive them. The road to spiritual deepness with God is unexpectedly long and often severe with its numerous pitfalls and impediments. Once we grasp this concept, it will make us consider the cost before we ask God to have His own way with us.

—*The Cup and the Glory*, pp. 19-20

### QUESTIONS FROM THE WORD

1. How does Mark 9:1 set the stage for the Transfiguration? How does Mark 9:2-8 set the stage for what will ultimately be asked by James and John in Mark 10:35-41 (pp. 22-24)?

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2. Based on 2 Peter 1:16-18 and John 1:14, why did Mark 9:1-8 so greatly affect Peter, James and John (pp. 23-24)?

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3. With all that had taken place, how would Jesus' answer to Peter be understood by him in Matthew 19:27-28 (pp. 28-29)? (Remember that the Transfiguration already had occurred in Matthew 17/Mark 9/Luke 9.) What does Luke 19:11 teach regarding the expectation of the apostles (p.29)? How would that affect their understanding of upcoming events?

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4. What is the significance of the six uses of the Greek word *de* ("but") in Mark 10:35-41 (pp. 32-33)?

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**L**esus' response to James and John's request casts a piercing light on our own hearts and our own understanding, or stated better, our own misunderstanding of prayer. For instance, Jesus told James and John they did not "know" what they asked, using a Greek word meaning, "to know intellectually; to understand." Scripture does not give any record of the facial expressions of James and John but they must have looked incredulous after the reply of Jesus. To them, it must have seemed at the time as though Jesus did not understand them. James and John "knew" what they wanted—and they knew He knew—and made request for it, being not at all ambiguous in what they asked. What they did not understand was the nature of prayer. They looked at their request as totally contingent on Jesus. He has what they wanted, He could open His "gift bag," wave His hand, and give it to them, much as He had done with the turning of the water into wine and the feeding of the multitudes. What they failed to see at this point in

their spiritual life was that it was not so much contingent on the ability of the One to give it as it was on their spiritual capacity to receive it. God is more than willing and gracious to give them—and us—what we pray for to the extent it accomplishes His own glory and our own ultimate good. The question is whether we are willing to let God bring us to the point where we are vessels fit to receive the deeper blessings from Him. So instead of “Give me this, Lord,” our prayer should be “Lord, please work in my life and remove the obstacles that keep me from knowing You better and which keep Me from being the vessel prepared for a deeper walk, deeper service and deeper blessings.”

—*The Cup and the Glory*, p. 31

### THE HEART OF THE MATTER

If you are unable to answer the following questions biblically, study the appropriate sections again.

1. Why would James and John be surprised at the way Jesus answered them in Mark 9-10?

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2. Why did Jesus answer James and John in the way that He did? What needed to take place in order for Him to answer their prayers (pp.31-32)?

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3. Why didn't James and John really know what they were asking Jesus in Mark 10:35-41 (pp. 30-32)?

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4. What is the difference and the significance of the active voice (“drinking the cup”) versus the passive voice (“to be baptized”)? Name some examples of each (pp. 33-35).

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**W**e can learn another lesson from this one encounter with Jesus. In receiving the deeper blessings of God, we have a part and God has a part. Jesus asked James and John if they were “able,” from the Greek word *dynamai*, which means “to be able,” or “to have the power.” It is where we get our English word “dynamite.” Were they able to drink the cup He drinks or to be baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized? Jesus employed two metaphors in His questioning response, one active and one passive. In drinking the cup we do the action (active); we willfully partake of it. In being baptized we receive the action (passive); we submit to what God gives us. One is a voluntary choice on our part—which by no means is easy—and the other is to respond by faith to the cross we bear in whatever God brings or allows into our lives, to count the cost, and keep going on in faith.

—*The Cup and the Glory*, p. 33

### PERSONAL APPLICATION SECTION

1. Why is the repeated phrase written with an ellipsis (i.e., “the three dots”): “By the way, what do you pray for . . . when you pray?” What do you think?

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2. How similar is the request made by James and John to your own request of “Jesus, I want You to do whatever I ask?” In what way are they the same? In what way do they differ? Explain.

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3. Would you be as astonished by the answer Jesus gave after the rich young ruler left as the immediate disciples were? Does your prayer life give proof of that (pp. 27-28)?

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4. What do you pray for . . . when you pray?

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5. Write your own personal application question from this chapter (in other words, “what have I learned”) that was not asked elsewhere and give the answer to your question.

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*W*e should also realize that we do not “know” (“to understand”) what we ask any more than James and John did. A refining process occurs that makes us fit to receive the deeper blessings of God. Yet our prayers focus mostly on the removal of the very elements God uses to bring us to the point of blessing. Is it any wonder Paul would say, “We do not know [“understand”] how to pray as we should” in Romans 8:26? We pray for greatness and blessing from God, and then for relief from the divine procedure that accomplishes this. On top of that, we usually blame God for unanswered prayers, while all the time He is in the process of answering what we glibly bring before Him.

—*The Cup and the Glory*, p. 35

### DEEPER WALK STUDY

For those who want to research additional related Scripture and topics, consider the following:

Almost a year transpired between Mark 9 and Mark 10, especially Mark 10:35-41 (p. 24). Trace and write what else Jesus did and said in the chapters that give additional information during this time, namely Luke 10-13 and John 7-10. This will give a better understanding of what Peter, James and John had heard. Remember, other than Jesus, no one knows of His glory like they do.