



# ESSENTIALS

**BUILDING FAITH FOR EVERYDAY LIFE**

**By Holly Furtick  
with Eric Stanford**

**Leader Guide**

*Essentials Leader Guide*

© 2021 by Holly Furtick with Eric Stanford

Published by Elevation Church  
11416 E. Independence Blvd., Suite N  
Matthews, NC 28105

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scriptures marked esv are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®).  
Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked tpt are from The Passion Translation®. Copyright © 2017, 2018, 2020 by Passion & Fire Ministries, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ThePassionTranslation.com.

ISBN 978-1-7377604-1-2

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

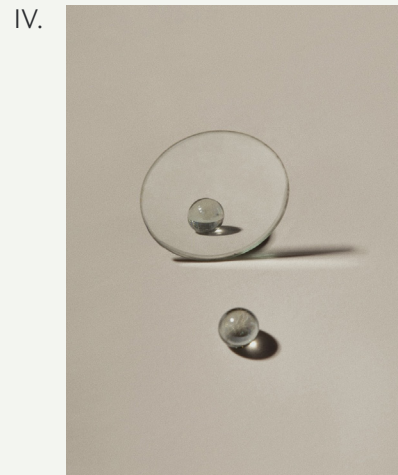
# ESSENTIALS

**BUILDING FAITH FOR EVERYDAY LIFE**

**By Holly Furtick**  
with Eric Stanford

**Leader Guide**

For use with the *Essentials Study Book* and the *Essentials Video Series*



Leader Resources	P.07
Week I: Introduction	P.10
Week II: Praying	P.14
Week III: Worshiping	P.18
Week IV: Hearing	P.22
Week V: Giving	P.26
Week VI: Conclusion	P.30

## TO eGROUP LEADERS

Thank you so much for leading an eGroup and helping those in our church find community and activate their faith. At Elevation, we believe life is better surrounded by people who encourage, support, and challenge us to grow in our relationship with Christ. You are the reason a big church feels small, and we couldn't do this without YOU! Thank you for the hours you spend seeking God, investing in people, and creating an atmosphere (either in your home, a coffee shop or restaurant, or even over Zoom) for authentic community. We are praying for each one of you as you lead others through the *Essentials* study.

*Essentials: Building Faith for Everyday Life* is a six-week study where you and your eGroup will meet together to study God's Word. Each week, your group will gather for a video teaching and discussion to focus on the basic practices of our faith.

On the next two pages, you'll find answers to some questions you might have before leading. Read this before your first group meeting, and set aside time to watch the *Essentials Leader Video*.

## Is there a suggested group flow?

### WEEKLY FORMAT

This study is six weeks long. The weeks are numbered according to your group meetings, not your daily readings. The first week—Week One—is an introductory week. Spend this meeting focused on getting to know everyone and watching the introduction video together.

### WEEKLY FLOW

*Fellowship (10 minutes):* Mingle and get the group warmed up by using the weekly conversation starters.

*Review (25 minutes):* Discuss the topic group members have been studying in their daily readings.

*Video teaching (10–20 minutes):* Watch the week's video with your group. Included for each week in the Study Book is a "Video Teaching Notes" page that group members can use to take notes on while watching the weekly teaching.

*Video topic discussion (10 minutes):* Briefly discuss some follow-up questions based on the video.

*Final instructions and close in prayer (5 minutes):* Share important information for the next meeting (for example, upcoming daily readings, any changes to group meeting location or time, and so on).

## Do group members need a copy of the *Essentials Study Book*?

Each group member should have a copy of the *Essentials Study Book*.

A copy can be purchased from the Elevation Church Store for \$10. The downloadable PDF can be printed as is or uploaded to a Kindle or Nook. (A free PDF is available at EssentialsStudy.com and is available for those in an eGroup.) We highly encourage group members using the PDF to print off the content each week or have a blank journal where they can write down the answers to their questions.

## What's in the *Essentials Study Book*?

### DAILY READINGS

After the first meeting, group members will read key Bible passages over the course of four days. Each day has two or more additional passages from the Bible and provides prompts designed for personal study and reflection arranged in six "R" steps (below). The accompanying questions are designed to help people experience God's Word on their own and hear Him speak to them. The questions, along with space to answer, are included after each daily reading.

The day one Read section for each week is the main scripture passage where discussion at the next group meeting will come from. If group members have a really busy week and can only get to one of the daily readings, have them focus on this one so they can make the most of their group time.

**Read:** In their own Bible or Bible app, group members will read the main passage.

**Review:** They'll consider what they observe about the passage, asking themselves, *What are the key words and main ideas I can find in this passage? What light do the related passages shine on the main passage?*

**Relate:** Group members will identify some ways they think this passage could apply in today's world through questions like, *How is it relevant to you and to others you know? Look for timeless principles as well as connections to timely events.*

**Respond:** Group members will then decide if God might be calling them to an action step as a response to what they've discovered. In other words, what will they start doing, stop doing, or change in their lives in reaction to what they read?

**Read More:** They'll read additional passages from the Old and New Testament based on the daily reading topic, then respond to a provided question for further personal application. You may want to use those questions during your group discussion as well.

**Reflect:** They'll write out a prayer to God reflecting on what He spoke to them.

Once a week, there's a seventh "R":

**Recite:** For weeks one through five, there is space in the Study Book for group members to write out the weekly memory passage on their own. There are also tear-out verse cards at the back of the study.

### DEVOTIONALS

Throughout the study are devotional readings that go deeper into each weekly topic and are helpful in understanding and personalizing the passages. Included with each reading is a question to help group members make the most of the passage and to reflect on what they read.

## Where can I access *Essentials* resources?

Both you and your group members can access *Essentials* curriculum and resources from the *Essentials* site, including the weekly teaching videos, the free downloadable *Essentials* PDF, and a downloadable Leader Guide.

To access all of these resources, visit EssentialsStudy.com and click "Participant or Leader" at the top of the page. When prompted, enter BUILDINGFAITH, the password for the site.



## Week I.

# INTRODUCTION

Spend time getting to know members in your group.

**Watch:** "Video One: Introduction"

**Discuss:** Holly's questions from the video

---

### START A CONVERSATION AND PLAY AN ICEBREAKER GAME (ABOUT 25 MINUTES)

Ask your group members to share their names and a little about themselves. Then use these questions to get a conversation going:

- When and how did you start attending Elevation?
- What are some things about the church that have meant the most to you, personally?
- If you're willing, tell about a time when you made a choice based on foolish thinking and later regretted it.
- What is your favorite story or teaching from Jesus' life?

### **ICEBREAKER #1: YOU WRITE THE QUESTION**

Give each person a three-by-five-inch card. (Or, if your group is meeting virtually, have people type their questions in the chat.) Announce that the topic of this game is “home.” Ask each group member to write a question that has to do with their homes. Examples:

- Do you live in a house, apartment, or condo?
- What is your favorite room in your home, and why?
- Where do you go in your house to pray?
- What does your dream home look like?
- If you could build a house anywhere, where would you want it?

Pile all the cards facedown in the middle of the group and let each person draw one. Go around the group until everyone has had a chance to draw and answer a question.

### **ICEBREAKER #2: STACK IT TILL IT FALLS**

If your group is meeting in person, play a stacking game like one of the following:

- Jenga
- Kerplunk
- Building a card house with a deck of cards
- Building a tower with children’s play blocks or plastic cups

Be sure to play the game at least once to the point where the stack falls! Today’s discussion is based on a Bible story about a house that collapses.

### **INTRODUCE AND WATCH THE WEEK ONE VIDEO (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)**

Before playing this video, say something like this to the group members: “While we’re watching this video, let’s think about some ways in which we might be living by philosophies or assumptions that are not compatible with what Jesus taught.”

Let group members know that if they want to take notes while the video is playing, they can do so on page 18 of their Study Book.

Play “Video One: Introduction” from EssentialsStudy.com.

### **DISCUSS WEEK ONE VIDEO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)**

These questions are also on page 19 in the Study Book for group members to respond to.

- In two minutes or less, tell about a group of people who have impacted your life and what led you to join this group.
- Holly talked about how the history of Elevation Church is about a million little miracles. What is one miracle that you have experienced in your time at our church?

### **CLOSE IN PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)**

Thank God for the opportunity the group has to come back to the basics of following Jesus. Ask Him to mold them together as a group and to use them to help each other be more faithful and consistent in following Jesus.

### **GIVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)**

Explain that, in the coming week, your group should do four days’ worth of readings in their Study Book, based on the same essential truth Holly presented in the video. At your next meeting, you’ll discuss the insights group members have on this topic. Ask if anyone has any questions about how this works.

Instruct your group to read and complete the Week One readings on pages 22–27. Tell them you’re looking forward to seeing them again next week.



## Week II.

# PRAYING

**Discuss the homework:** Established on Jesus' teachings (pages 22–23)

**Watch:** "Video Two: Prayer"

**Discuss:** Holly's questions from the video

---

### START A CONVERSATION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

- Has anybody in the group ever helped to build a house? If so, describe how a house's foundation is built.
- Describe your knowledge of the Bible. Have you been a diligent student of the Bible for years? Or would you say you only know a little bit here and there about the Bible? Or are you somewhere in between?
- What is one skill you have learned, and what did it take to become good at it (e.g., playing basketball, playing piano, programming software, etc.)? (Point out a common feature when you want to be successful in almost anything—the importance of learning the *fundamentals* and doing consistent *follow-through*.)



## ESSENTIAL TRUTH

We should build our lives on Jesus' teachings.

### DISCUSS THE WEEK ONE TOPIC (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Spend time discussing the Week One key passage together as a group. Have group members turn to pages 18–33 to reference their notes and answers to the daily questions. Ask for a group member to read the Week One key passage, Luke 6:46–49, then choose a few questions for your group to discuss together:

- **Review:** How does this passage relate to this week's topic?
- **Relate:** What are some ways you identify with this passage?
- **Respond:** What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?
- **Read More:** What is an example of a time when you obeyed God and understood later why that choice was for the best?

**ADDITIONAL WEEK ONE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** (if time allows, select a few questions below to continue the discussion):

- What are the kinds of "storms" in life that tend to do the most damage? Give an example from your own life if you're willing.
- Notice that a house endures a storm by having been built on a strong foundation long before the storm clouds ever arrived. What does this say about how we build a life on a firm foundation?
- Can you think of some specific teachings of Jesus that would help us to endure certain "storms" in life? (Leader, here are some possible examples: Jesus' statement in John 15:18 that "if the world hates you, remember that it hated me first" could help when we face persecution. Or Jesus' prayer in Luke 22:42: "Not my will, but yours, be done" can help us to accept it when God has a different answer for a prayer than we were hoping for.)
- What will you do to build your life more firmly on Jesus' teaching so that you're prepared to endure the storms yet to come? Remember, it's not just knowing what we should do, it's doing it.

### CONCLUDE THE DISCUSSION WITH PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Pray for yourself and the members of your group, asking God to help all of you become firmly grounded in the teachings of Jesus so that you may endure, no matter what lies ahead.

### INTRODUCE AND WATCH THE WEEK TWO VIDEO (21 MINUTES)

This week's video introduces the *Essentials* topic that group members will be studying on their own in the coming week: prayer.

Play "Video Two: Prayer" from EssentialsStudy.com.

**Note:** During this week's video teaching, Holly will lead your group through a prayer activity. Group members will listen to a scripture passage and then respond to a prompt in their Study Book. After each prompt is read, the group will have about one minute to respond before the next scripture passage is read. If members need more time to answer, pause the video before pushing "Play" and moving on to the next scripture and prompt.

Before starting the Week Two video, let the group know they can take notes on page 40 and will also complete a Prayer Guide activity on pages 42–43 during the video. If a member does not have their Study Book, encourage them to write down their thoughts on a piece of paper.

### DISCUSS WEEK TWO VIDEO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

These questions are also on page 41 in the Study Book for group members to respond to.

- Tell about a time when God did not answer your prayer the way you thought He would. How was your faith in Him deepened through that process?
- Share about a time when you experienced the direct connection between peace and prayer.

### GIVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CLOSE IN PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Two readings on pages 44–59.



## Week III.

# WORSHIPING

**Discuss the homework:** Pray about everything, all the time (pages 44–45)

**Watch:** “Video Three: Worshiping”

**Discuss:** Holly’s questions from the video

---

### START A CONVERSATION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

- How was last week for you? Share a joy or sorrow with the group.
- Would you say the daily Study Book readings are becoming a valuable part of your devotional life? Why or why not?
- When you have something you can’t wait to talk about, who do you usually go to for the conversation? Why this person?

## ESSENTIAL TRUTH

Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God. When we have a relationship with God, we can talk to Him about everything.

### DISCUSS THE WEEK TWO TOPIC (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Spend time discussing the Week Two key passage together as a group. Have group members turn to pages 40–55 to reference their notes and answers to the daily questions. Ask for a group member to read the Week Two key passage, Philippians 4:4–9, then choose a few questions for your group to discuss together:

- **Review:** How does this passage relate to this week's topic?
- **Relate:** What are some ways you identify with this passage?
- **Respond:** What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?
- **Read More:** What's standing in the way of your making prayer into a lifestyle instead of a special event?

### ADDITIONAL WEEK TWO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How was prayer modeled for you when you were younger?
- What does your prayer life look like today?
- What would you say is the connection between praying and having peace in one's spirit? What other blessings may come to us because of prayer?
- With regard to prayer, what might be some bad attitudes or bad habits you need to break?
- How do you intend to make prayerfulness something that permeates your whole life?

### CONCLUDE THE DISCUSSION WITH PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Ask God to help all the group participants overcome whatever obstacles are keeping them from richer and more regular prayer.

### INTRODUCE AND WATCH THE WEEK THREE VIDEO (16 MINUTES)

This week's video introduces the *Essentials* topic that group members will be studying on their own in the coming week: worship.

Play "Video Three: Worshiping" from EssentialsStudy.com.

### DISCUSS WEEK THREE VIDEO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

These questions are also on page 65 in the Study Book for group members to respond to.

- How does the way you grew up influence the way you worship corporately? Are there ways you would like to be more expressive?
- Share with the group one song that instantly helps you feel connected to God and why.

### GIVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CLOSE IN PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Three readings on pages 66–77.



## Week IV.

# HEARING

**Discuss the homework:** Lifting hands to God (pages 66–67)

**Watch:** “Video Four: Hearing”

**Discuss:** Holly’s questions from the video

---

### START A CONVERSATION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

- Do you consider yourself more demonstrative or more reserved? More outgoing or more introverted? More of a thinker or more of a feeler?
- Describe one worship experience you participated in at Elevation that was especially meaningful.

## ESSENTIAL TRUTH

Worship is the outward expression of our knowledge and appreciation for God's greatness and His goodness.

### DISCUSS THE WEEK THREE TOPIC (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Spend time discussing the Week Three key passage together as a group. Have group members turn to pages 64–77 to reference their notes and answers to the daily questions. Ask for a group member to read the Week Three key passage, Psalm 63:1–5, then choose a few questions for your group to discuss together:

- **Review:** How does this passage relate to this week's topic?
- **Relate:** What are some ways you identify with this passage?
- **Respond:** What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?
- **Read More:** Have you ever had a moment when worship momentarily lifted a burden you were carrying?

### ADDITIONAL WEEK THREE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If you attended church as a child or teen, what was the worship in that church like? How has that experience affected the way you think about worship today?
- During Elevation experiences, do you lift your hands or use other bodily motions? Why or why not?
- What would you say is the purpose of worship?
- How does worshiping God affect our heart? How does it influence our minds?
- What can you do to be more engaged when you go to worship experiences from now on?
- How can you take worship into your daily life throughout the week?

### CONCLUDE THE DISCUSSION WITH PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

As a group, spend time thanking God for His goodness and praising Him for who He is. (Or, as an alternative, you could play Elevation Worship songs and worship together as a group.)

### INTRODUCE AND WATCH THE WEEK FOUR VIDEO (17 MINUTES)

This week's video introduces the *Essentials* topic that group members will be studying on their own in the coming week: hearing God's voice.

Play "Video Four: Hearing" from EssentialsStudy.com.

### DISCUSS WEEK FOUR VIDEO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

These questions are also on page 85 in the Study Book for group members to respond to.

- Share about a time when you heard (or felt) the voice of God guiding you or encouraging you.
- What are a few things that distract or block you from hearing God's voice?

### GIVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CLOSE IN PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Four readings on pages 86–97.



## Week V.

# GIVING

**Discuss the homework:** God's guidance (pages 86–87)

**Watch:** "Video Five: Giving"

**Discuss:** Holly's questions from the video

---

### START A CONVERSATION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

- When you have an important choice to make, how do you usually go about deciding?
- Do you have a history of getting "words" or "nudges" from God, or does this concept seem strange to you?
- Do you tend to be a worrier, or are you generally content to take life as it comes?
- When you were growing up, did you mostly see God as condemning and disapproving or as loving and affirming? Why do you think that was?

## ESSENTIAL TRUTH

God is always speaking to us. When we enter into a relationship with Him, we learn to hear His voice.

### DISCUSS THE WEEK FOUR TOPIC (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Spend time discussing the Week Four key passage together as a group. Have group members turn to pages 84–97 to reference their notes and answers to the daily questions. Ask for a group member to read the Week Four key passage, John 10:2–5, 14, then choose a few questions for your group to discuss together:

- **Review:** How does this passage relate to this week’s topic?
- **Relate:** What are some ways you identify with this passage?
- **Respond:** What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?
- **Read More:** What is one area in your life where you’re hoping God will give you some guidance?

### ADDITIONAL WEEK FOUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If you feel that God has ever spoken to you plainly, tell the group about it.
- What role does discernment play when we think that God has spoken to us?
- Holly says, “God is much more concerned about your integrity, and your character, and your relationship with Him than He is about which path you choose.” What’s your reaction to that?
- None of us can flawlessly speak for God, but what are some loving, affirming things you think God might wish to say to you or to another member of the group today?
- What are some things you can do to focus on your character and commitment to God in the next season of your life, no matter what that season may hold for you?

### CONCLUDE THE DISCUSSION WITH PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Ask the group members if any of them would like to share a particular issue on their heart in which they’re hoping for God’s guidance. Take time to pray for one another.

### INTRODUCE AND WATCH THE WEEK FIVE VIDEO (15 MINUTES)

This week’s video introduces the *Essentials* topic that group members will be studying on their own in the coming week: giving.

Play “Video Five: Giving” from EssentialsStudy.com.

### DISCUSS WEEK FIVE VIDEO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

These questions are also on page 104 in the Study Book for group members to respond to.

- Which is more difficult for you, giving consistently or giving cheerfully?
- Share about a time when God provided for you (remember provision is not always monetary).

### GIVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CLOSE IN PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Remind your group to read and complete the Week Five readings on pages 108–117.



## Week VI.

# CONCLUSION

**Discuss the homework:** Generosity's rebound (pages 106–107)

**Watch:** "Video Six: Conclusion"

**Discuss:** Holly's questions from the video

---

### START A CONVERSATION (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

- Do you sometimes daydream about what you would do if you suddenly received a bunch of money? If so, describe what you'd do with it.
- Is the topic of tithing or giving offerings to the Church a sore spot for you? If so, explain.
- When you contribute money to the work of the Church or other Christian organizations, how does it make you feel?



## ESSENTIAL TRUTH

Giving generously to the work of ministry is an act of worship that flows out of our gratitude for what God has done.

### DISCUSS THE WEEK FIVE TOPIC (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Spend time discussing the Week Five key passage together as a group. Have group members turn to pages 104–117 to reference their notes and answers to the daily questions. Ask for a group member to read the Week Five key passage, 2 Corinthians 9:6–15, then choose a few questions for your group to discuss together:

- **Review:** How does this passage relate to this week's topic?
- **Relate:** What are some ways you identify with this passage?
- **Respond:** What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?
- **Read More:** If it's more blessed to give than to receive, why do we usually prefer to receive? Tell about a time when you were blessed by giving.

### ADDITIONAL WEEK FIVE DISCUSSION QUESTION:

- Do you think it's possible to *make* yourself become a cheerful giver, or is that something that has to happen naturally by some other means? Explain your viewpoint.
- What are some dangers of greed and the love of money you've seen play out in people's lives?
- Have you ever been on the receiving end of a generous gift? Did that gift inspire you to be generous to someone else?
- What changes do you need to make in your financial life in order to become a more generous giver? (Leader, encourage group members to get help with debt, make a budget, simplify their lifestyle, talk with a financial planner or coach, or do whatever else it takes in order to free themselves up to be more generous. Budgeting tools and other financial resources can be found at [ElevationChurch.org](http://ElevationChurch.org).)

### CONCLUDE THE DISCUSSION WITH PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Ask God to help the group members trust Him with their finances, giving cheerfully and generously as He provides for them.

After the prayer, it's time to switch from the Week Five topic to the final, Week Six topic.

### INTRODUCE AND WATCH THE WEEK SIX VIDEO (8 MINUTES)

This week's video concludes our study.

Play "Video Six: Conclusion" from [EssentialsStudy.com](http://EssentialsStudy.com).

### DISCUSS WEEK SIX VIDEO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

These questions are also on page 127 in the Study Book for group members to respond to.

- Deep is doing. What week of the study has made the deepest impact on your faith because of a step you have taken?
- Think about an area of your faith where you want to grow. What's a step you haven't taken yet that you can do this week?

### GIVE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CLOSE IN PRAYER (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Invite group members to express their gratitude to God for the scriptural truths they learned in *Essentials*, as well as to ask for His help in faithfully *doing* what they *know*.

