

RULE #7

Envision God's enveloping presence.

Goal:

To lead students to implement steps that help them practice the presence of God.

Introduction:

As your group members gather for the meeting, begin by asking what, if any, actions steps of faith they took since your last gathering. If they did take such steps, ask what impact the steps have had on their journey.

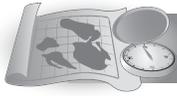
As you move into Rule 7, recount the story that's on page 41 of the study guide. Then ask:

Have you experienced similar comments from people? How would you answer the question as to the expected differences and similarities between Christians and non-Christians as they face life's challenges?

Then make a transition statement similar to this:

One truth should characterize us Christians as we experience difficulties. We should manifest Rule #7 which is:

Envision God's enveloping presence.



PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Recount the Red Sea story and emphasize the scene of verses 19-20 which are the basis for Rule #7.

Ask the attendees to describe what they think verses 19-20 looked like as they transpired.

Then make a concluding statement such as:

Regardless of how the scene actually appeared, God was sharing His presence with His children and He wants to do the same for us. God wants us to know we're not alone as we face life's problems. He is with us.



PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

On page 42 of the study guide are numerous verses from the Psalms about the promise of God's presence with us. Before your meeting write out several of these on index cards. Ask different members to read them. Before they are read ask people to listen for a promise in each verse. After all are read, ask questions like:

Collectively what are these verses teaching?

Do you believe God is with you right now during your journey? Why or why not?

Describe a time when you sensed God's presence with you.

How does God's presence affect your personal Red Sea journey?



PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

In his book Rob offers four suggestions for practicing the presence of God. Read each one individually pausing after each one for discussion. Ask the group how to implement each one. Make sure the group is being very specific. In other words: How can we visualize God's presence in our mind? What type of prayers should we pray to access God's nearness? How do we reflect God presence in our demeanor?

- Affirm God's nearness in your heart.
- Visualize God's presence in your mind.
- Access God's nearness through prayer.
- Reflect God's presence in your demeanor.



PONDER THE JOURNEY

Rule 7 is very "spiritual" and subjective. For example, we can't measure whether we sense God's presence the way we can measure an action step. It's very important that members journal on a consistent basis. Recording thoughts, insights, and prayers is an excellent way to rest in God's presence. Many times putting emotional and spiritual impressions on paper helps to solidify them in our Red Sea experience. Please end the meeting by strongly encouraging people to be consistent with their daily journal.