



# Study Guide for "The Three Chairs"

Feb 3, 2008  
(101 level)

## Open Up

Tell your group about your favorite chair – maybe it was the most comfortable, or maybe you have sentimental memories from childhood or as a parent cuddling with your children, etc.

**TRANSITION:** Though a chair is only a piece of furniture, it can remind us of important events. In this small group study, we'll use chairs as a symbol of life-important values. "Chair one" is a living, dynamic, faithful relationship with God summarized as **COMMITMENT**. "Chair two" is on wheels, symbolizing **COMPROMISE** that moves between following religious ritual and following the expectations of contemporary culture. "Chair three" is someone, possibly even a nice person, who lives a life of spiritual **COMPLACENCY**.

## Dig In

(1) Read Joshua 24:14-18 and Judges 2:7-11. To what "chair" is Joshua calling the Israelites? Based on the situation in Judges 2, which "chairs" did Israel choose in the coming generations? From this story, what can we learn about the challenge of raising a "chair one" next generation?

**OPTIONAL:** Discuss some examples of success in passing "chair one" values to the next generation.

(2) Read Matthew 13:3-8 and Matthew 13:18-23. Compare the four soils in Jesus' story with the three chairs. What indicator shows the kind of soil you are (or in which chair you sit)?

(3) Read Matthew 7:16-27. In verse 22, what kind of religious actions do complacent, compromised people claim to do for Jesus? What might be some modern examples of religious actions that are "nice" but not by themselves, meaningful? In contrast, what kind of actions are truly "doing the will" of the heavenly Father?

(4) Read Revelation 3:14-19. Though Jesus is speaking to a congregation, his words can also apply to each of us, if you or I are compromising or complacent. How might a contemporary church or individual Christian think they are visionary or rich, when God judges them as blind and poor? **BACKGROUND** The writer of Revelation is recording Jesus' words to churches in seven cities in the Roman Empire. Two mini-letters are "good news", three are "mixed news", and two are "bad news." Some of the figures of speech in the Laodicean mini-letter could have referred to characteristics of the city. Laodicea was a wealthy city, but its water supply was lukewarm (a neighboring city seven miles to the north was known for its hot springs, while a city ten miles to the south had cold springs).

## Work On

From your attitudes to the Bible, church, marriage, and parenting, you can assess in which chair you sit. Discuss with your group a time when you may have sat in a different chair than you do now. What moved you from one chair to another?

## Lift Up

Read Revelation 3:20 as a reminder of Jesus' ongoing invitation to us, even when we are sitting in the "wrong chair." Pray for the commitment of each member in your group (perhaps even pray by name).



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## **Advanced**

(to be used alongside with  
101 level study guide)

### **Dig In**

(1) Read Psalms 1:1-3. How does this Psalm describe a “chair one” man or woman?

**OPTIONAL:** Use similar figures of speech to describe a “chair two” compromiser.

(2) Read Judges 2:16-19. These verses follow the Joshua 24 and Judges 2 story from the 101 level guide. Describe the spiritual “game of musical chairs” the Israelites tragically played. Talk with your group about some examples from your own life of “playing musical chairs” when you should have committed to God.

(3) Read John 15:9-15. Jesus links loving him with obeying him, but our obedience is not in the form of ritual but instead loving others. Talk with your group about a situation in which you might have to choose between religious ritual and demonstrating genuine love to someone.

### **Work On**

In addition to the indicators in the Work On section in the 101 guide (attitudes to the Bible, church, marriage, and parenting) what could be other indicators that show in which chair you sit?