Leader's Page — Morality Lost Study Guide & Workbook, Christian Living / Social Issues Edition

For Group Leaders

You're not just walking a group through a workbook. You're doing, on purpose, what got done for most of us by accident — handing down character through proximity, one week at a time. This page is here to help you lead well, not to make the material harder than it needs to be.

How to Run a Session

A simple structure you can reuse every week:

1. **Open (5 min)** — Briefly introduce the week's chapter. You don't need to summarize it fully; the group has already read it.
2. **Discuss (20–30 min)** — Work through the chapter's discussion questions. Leader notes below flag what each question is really fishing for.
3. **This Week (5–10 min)** — Introduce the action item using the *receive, don't hunt* framing: this is something to notice arriving, not something to go search for. Model it yourself first if you can — a quick example from your own week goes further than instructions.
4. **Check-in (5 min)** — Before moving to the new chapter, ask how last week's action item showed up for people. Keep it light; this isn't an accountability audit.
5. **Close** — Point to next week's chapter and, if you're using it, remind the group about the Room at MoralityLost.com, a place to share a moment of their own.

The "Receive, Don't Hunt" Cheat Sheet

Many chapters (3 through 9, and 12) end their "This Week" section with an added sentence describing something that **arrives unbidden**, rather than an instruction to go look for it. For example, Chapter 4: "And if you watch someone make the harder, quieter choice this week — the one with no one there to see it — ask yourself, later, whether you'd have done the same with no one watching."

- **Don't say:** "This week, watch for a moment when someone shows you their character."
- **Do say (the book's approach):** something closer to "This week, notice a moment when someone's character was shown to you without your asking."

As leader, your job is to protect that framing when you talk about it out loud — it's easy to accidentally "hunt-ify" it in conversation even when the printed text gets it right.

Chapter-by-Chapter Leader Notes

Preface

- **What this session is really about:** Naming the problem before diagnosing it — moral foundation eroding quietly, not a single dramatic collapse. Sets the tone: personal testimony, not distant expertise.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** whether the group can locate this erosion in their own relationships, not just "out there" in culture.
- **Watch out for:** the group staying abstract/political. Redirect toward Q1's personal framing ("a conversation that felt impossible") if discussion drifts to news events.
- **This Week:** Identify one relationship where conversation has become difficult; commit to one honest exchange — listening more than speaking, asking rather than telling.

Chapter 1 — Morality Lost

- **What this chapter is really about:** The five-word framework (Social, Moral, Media, Responsibility, Agenda) and the core thesis: morality produces character, character produces trust, and trust is collapsing.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** whether the group's own experience of institutional distrust matches the author's diagnosis — and whether they've been looking for causes in the wrong place (politics/policy vs. moral foundation).
- **Watch out for:** the temptation to name specific institutions/politicians and turn this into a political grievance session rather than a moral-foundation conversation.
- **This Week:** Identify one area where "winning the argument" has taken priority over truth; choose honesty over position in one conversation.

Chapter 2 — Morality Lost: Impacts On Us

- **What this chapter is really about:** How moral erosion shows up in small, ordinary daily moments (the "ten minutes, seven failures of civic trust" opening) and lands differently across generations.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** self-awareness of daily self-protection habits people no longer notice they're performing.
- **Watch out for:** nostalgia derailing into "things were better back then" without connecting it back to the trust-mechanism argument.

- **This Week:** Perform one deliberate act of trust toward a neighbor, colleague, or stranger — something you would normally protect yourself against — and notice what it costs and what it returns.

Chapter 3 — Morality Lost: The Middle Generations

- **What this chapter is really about:** The generational feedback loop — less morality produces less character, which leaves less to transmit to the next generation.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** who transmitted moral foundation to the group member, and whether they can name it specifically enough to pass on.
- **Watch out for:** people who can't immediately name a source — give space, this can take a minute to surface.
- **This Week:** Write down three values handed down to you; identify how you are or aren't passing each one on; share at least one with someone younger this week. *Receive:* if you watch someone hand something down to someone younger, name who handed the same thing down to you.

Chapter 4 — Character: How Does It Relate to Morality?

- **What this chapter is really about:** Character as instinct shaped into something reliable over a lifetime — illustrated through the author's father (a Marine and mason) and the "I think I'll let it rain" story.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** a concrete, specific memory of witnessed character — not an abstract definition.
- **Watch out for:** the group defining character in the abstract instead of naming an actual person/moment. Push gently for specifics.
- **This Week:** Facing a real decision, ask what the person with the clearest character you know would do — then do that. *Receive:* if you watch someone make the harder, quieter choice with no one there to see it, ask whether you'd have done the same.

Chapter 5 — Components of Morality

- **What this chapter is really about:** Morality can't be assembled from parts — the listed words (integrity, honesty, virtue, goodness, decency, righteousness, character, justice, and ethics) are indicators, not ingredients.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** what's actually in each person's "internal reference library" — real formative experiences/Scripture/people, not a textbook answer.
- **Watch out for:** the conversation staying philosophical/definitional. Anchor back to Micah 6:8's three concrete components if it drifts.
- **This Week:** Write a personal definition of morality grounded in faith; compare it to a secular colleague or neighbor's likely definition. *Receive:* if you catch a flash of someone's integrity or decency, say so to them.

Chapter 6 — Morality Lost: Faith

- **What this chapter is really about:** Faith as "the ground beneath the ground" — foundation for character, not just one value among others. Told through personal witness stories (hardware store prayer, Mother's Day sermon).
- **Discussion is fishing for:** whether the group can point to faith functioning as foundation in their own life, not just belief they hold.
- **Watch out for:** this chapter can pull toward church/politics debate (Q4 raises it directly) — keep steering back to personal moral presence, not political engagement.
- **This Week:** Identify one way your faith is visible — not just stated — in daily public life. *Receive:* if someone's faith shows up in an ordinary, unrehearsed moment, ask them about it.

Chapter 7 — What Is Social?

- **What this chapter is really about:** The word "social" hollowed out from physical presence to digital feeds — and why physical presence creates accountability that digital connection can't replicate.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** honest self-assessment of online behavior vs. in-person behavior.
- **Watch out for:** this can turn into generic "phones are bad" venting — keep it anchored to the accountability argument specifically.
- **This Week:** Replace one digital communication with a phone call or in-person conversation — one that actually matters, not just a convenience swap. *Receive:* if someone shows up in person rather than texting, notice what that costs them and what it gives you.

Chapter 8 — Morality Lost: Media

- **What this chapter is really about:** The shift from local-newspaper-era accountability to an environment where influence has replaced information — recovery comes from individual choices, not regulation.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** honest application of Philippians 4:8 to the group's actual media diet, not a hypothetical.
- **Watch out for:** people naming other people's media habits instead of their own. Keep the Philippians 4:8 test personal.
- **This Week:** Apply the Philippians 4:8 test before sharing anything online for a week; keep a simple log of what passes and what doesn't. *Receive:* if a piece of media is clearly trying to shape you rather than inform you, name what it's doing.

Chapter 9 — Morality Lost: Responsibility

- **What this chapter is really about:** Responsibility as the practical expression of character — its two meanings (causation and obligation) — and that accountability cannot be fully transferred, only the task can be delegated.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** a specific obligation someone has let slide, not a general confession.
- **Watch out for:** deflection toward systemic/institutional responsibility (Q3 raises it) as a way to avoid the personal question. Bring it back to Q2's personal test.
- **This Week:** Identify one obligation quietly let slide; address it directly this week. *Receive:* if you catch yourself explaining away someone else's dropped responsibility, ask what you'd think if it were yours.

Chapter 10 — Morality Lost: Agenda

- **What this chapter is really about:** Hidden agenda — the gap between stated and actual intention — traced through 28 documented historical examples spanning 3,200 years, framed against Matthew 5:37 ("let your yes be yes").
- **Discussion is fishing for:** a specific, honest example of where the person's own stated and actual reasons diverge — not just examples in others.
- **Watch out for:** the historical-sweep material (Shakespeare, the 28 examples) is genuinely interesting and can eat the whole session if you let it — budget time deliberately toward the personal application questions (Q1, Q4).
- **This Week:** Name a situation where your stated and actual reason aren't fully the same; choose transparency this week even if it costs something; name the clearest example of a gap between stated and actual agenda, and bring it to prayer.

Chapter 11 — Morality Lost: Conclusion

- **What this chapter is really about:** The solution belongs to the individual — not government, policy, or platform. Living openly is itself a form of teaching.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** who taught the person this way (living example, not lecture), and whether they're passing it on.
- **Watch out for:** despair/overwhelm at "fixing the world" — the chapter's whole point is narrowing the scope to what's actually controllable. Reinforce Q4's line-drawing exercise if the group feels stuck.
- **This Week:** Write down one specific behavior (not a value) you intend to change as a result of the book; share it with someone who will hold you to it.

Chapter 12 — Morality Found

- **What this chapter is really about:** "Character is not taught — it is caught." The book's simplest conclusion: live well in front of the people already around you.
- **Discussion is fishing for:** an honest look at what's currently "being caught" by the people around each group member — intended or not.
- **Watch out for:** this is the final chapter — leave real time for Q4 (whole-book reflection) rather than rushing it because time ran out on Chapter 10 or 11.
- **This Week:** Name one person who needs this book; give them your copy or get them one; commit to one conversation about it. *Receive:* if you find yourself explaining the book to someone, notice what you say first — that's probably what caught in you.

Closing — Your Moral Inventory

- Not a discussion session — a personal reflection page (no questions, five open prompts) intended for private use before God, not group discussion. Consider giving the group silent time with this page at the end of the final session rather than talking through it aloud.

Facilitation Tips

- **Silence isn't failure.** Give a question 10–15 seconds before you jump in to fill it.
- **One voice dominating?** Redirect gently: "I want to make sure we hear from a few other people on this one."
- **Group drifts off-topic?** Acknowledge it, then bring it back: "That's worth talking about — let's come back to it after we finish this chapter."
- **Someone shares something heavy.** You don't have to fix it in the moment. A simple "thank you for sharing that" and a follow-up after the session is often enough.
