



*This guide is a supplement to the weekly sermon. We encourage families and groups to use it. When we hear God's Word, we need to do more than listen. The Bible says, "Be doers of the word, not hearers only (James 1:22)." **Step 1: GATHER** with your family or group. **Step 2: REVIEW** and **DISCUSS** the key points and scriptures from the sermon. **Step 3: PRAY** for the prayer requests shared by your family or group.*

### **DISCUSSION STARTER**

Ask your group if they have known someone who endured a season of affliction and pain. Discuss how we are called to live our lives as living sacrifices (Holy and pure). Our message focuses on Jesus' teaching that every believer will go through painful times that will purify our lives and preserve our faith in God. Say to your group, "Perhaps you know someone who is going through great affliction right now. How do you think you would respond to such affliction and pain? How could God bring good from these painful times?"

### **DIGGING DEEPER 1**

**Read Mark 9:43-48.** Pastor discussed the word for Hell (Gehenna). It was an ancient garbage dump just south of Jerusalem that was constantly burning to consume all the waste that was dumped there. Gehenna was seen as a final place of punishment for the ungodly. Jesus was giving a very vivid picture of what Hell would be like — never ending fire. Jesus stated it would "better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell" and "it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell." Ask, "If Jesus isn't asking us to self-mutilate, then what is He telling us here?" Pastor stated that, "sin slowly rots away our lives until we are in hell." Ask, "What drastic measures are we willing to take to remove sin out of our lives today?" Remind your group that we should never negotiate with sin, we amputate sin.

### **DIGGING DEEPER 2**

**Read Mark 9:49-50.** Jesus said, "Everyone will be salted with fire." Salt was and is still today used as a preserver and fire purifies. What Jesus is saying is that every believer will go through painful times that will purify their lives and preserve their faith in God. Ask, "How does this change the way we view adversity and affliction in our lives?" Ask, "Is it possible for salt to lose its saltiness? (verse 50)" We lose our saltiness when we conform to the world more than we conform to Christ and His Word. Jesus calls His followers the salt of the Earth. We are to bring value into the world by sharing and spreading the love of Christ. Ask, "What are some things we are doing to prevent moral decay in our community?"

### **DIGGING DEEPER 3**

**Read 1 Peter 4:12-13.** Peter is saying that our fiery trials are not strange but are meant to refine our faith, and purify our lives, so our faith will be preserved. Ask, "Why do we usually see our trials as bad?" Discuss, "How can we learn to face the fiery trial and see the intended purpose, to strengthen our faith and glorify God?"

### **DOING THE WORD**

Ask your group, "Why is it so hard to open our lives up to God?" Tell them, "God is asking us today, to expose every hidden part to Him? Are you ready to be purified? Are you tired of living with sin? Are you willing to allow Him to lead you into a life of fellowship?" Have your group pray Psalm 139:23-24. Encourage them to surrender every hidden area to God – everything – to God. Challenge them to be "salty" by influencing and enhancing the flavor of how people experience God through us.