

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Message Series: The Dark
Message Title: Silence
Speaker: Lance Burch
Date: September 10, 2017

UP NEXT

- **WOMEN'S EVENT** - Coming next week is a women's event that will encourage, challenge and change you. You'll laugh, pray and study scripture with women from all walks of life and leave with a renewed sense of calling and love for Christ. The Living Proof Simulcast with Beth Moore will be held on September 16th from 9am to 4:15pm. register online at reality.church/events.
- **LIFE GROUP TAILGATE & CHILI COOK OFF** - Go ahead and mark your calendars! Join us as a Life Group on **October 8th** in the parking lot for a Life Group Tailgating Day. Bring your chairs, fire pits, hot dogs, big screens, etc. and cheer on your favorite team! We will also be hosting a Chili Cook Off for you aspiring chefs out there. Stay tuned for more information.

MAIN IDEA

Lament is not preparation for worship... Lament is worship! God doesn't watch you in the dark, He is with you in the dark.

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome back Life Groups! Some groups have stayed the same with little to no change. Other groups have lost members to deployment, moving, and other circumstances. Yet other groups are welcoming new members to their group for the first time.
- This first week back I want your group to do two main things. 1) Go over and sign the Life Group Agreement (*attached if you do not already have a copy*). 2) Spend some time talking about this week's sermon.

DISCUSSION

- Spend some time revisiting with group members. Catch up on Summer activities, kids, plans, etc.
 - Be sure to read over the Life Group Agreement. Taking special care to go over the expectations of the group.
 - Once all of the information has been agreed upon (meeting time, location, etc) have each member sign the agreement. We do not recommend Life Groups change their meeting time or location throughout the semester unless absolutely necessary.

Have someone read [\(1 Thessalonians 3:1-8\)](#)

- What do these passages tell us when it comes to Christians and hard times?
- How would you be able to adequately help someone who was struggling with the following questions?
 - *What do you do when your world caves in?*
 - *How does a Christian respond when hard times come?*
 - *What can we do to keep our faith strong during those times?*
- More recently, how would you respond to someone who was questioning God as to why He allowed a hurricane, earthquake, fire, or flood to destroy people's lives?

- When you go through hard times (The Dark)... would you consider yourself a **Student** or a **Victim**?
 - Some people go through life as professional victims, always talking about how they have been mistreated. But perpetual victimhood dooms you to a life of self-centered misery because you learn nothing from your trials.
- To help you decide, here are some differences between a *Student* and a *Victim*:
 - A victim says, "Why did this happen to me?" A student says, "What can I learn from this?"
 - A victim blames other people (or God) for his problems. A student asks, "How much of this did I bring on myself?"
 - A victim looks at everyone else and cries out, "Life isn't fair." A student looks at life and says, "What happened to me could have happened to anyone."
 - A victim believes his hard times have come because God is trying to punish him. A student understands that God allows hard times in order to help him grow.
 - A victim would rather complain than find a solution. A student has no time to complain because he is busy making the best of his situation.
 - A victim feels so sorry for himself that he has no time for others. A student focuses on helping others so that he has no time to feel sorry for himself.
 - A victim begs God to remove the problems of life so that he might be happy. A student has learned through the problems of life that God alone is the source of all true happiness.
- For the Christian, which is more important? The particular trial you are going through? Or how you are responding to the particular trial?
 - Which one do we have control over?
- Lance said there were typically three options when people go through "The Dark":
 - *"There is no God"*
 - *"God doesn't care"*
 - *"God does care, He's doing something I don't understand"*
- Which of these is your typical response?

APPLY IT

- Everything that happens in the world is either caused by God or allowed by God, and there is no third category. Nothing ever "just happens" and nothing is caused by someone or something outside of God's control. That means there is no such thing as chance or fate or luck.
- Lance encouraged us all to "Learn to Lament"
 - How are you going to do that?
 - How will this change your approach to experiencing "The Dark"?

RESOURCES

- We have compiled a list of reliable, trustworthy counselors who are here to listen and help, as well as many other services for specific needs. Visit reality.church/thedark