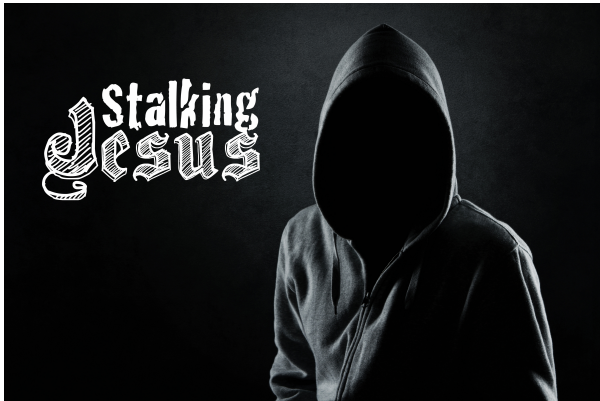




C¹ onechurch

big idea small group discussion



Loss, grief, pain, bitter disappointment...all too often, these characterize our existence. Indeed, it often feels like we can't go for very long in this life without experiencing at least one of them. So, what does this tell us about God? What kind of God is He that He would allow such things to happen? Sometimes we may feel as though God is uninvolved in our circumstances and our concerns. But God is always engineering a perfect plan and purpose though not always immediately visible to us.

BIG IDEA: Pray honestly. Because honestly, God wants the real you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time in your life when the roof felt like it was caving in. What kinds of prayers did you find yourself lifting up during this time?
2. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Psalm 13:1.* The writer of this Psalm felt abandoned by God. When have you wanted to cry out, "God where are you?" What were the circumstances that led to this?
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Psalm 13:2-4.* The Psalmist longed to understand his situation. Why does it often feel like God is so slow in providing answers?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Psalm 13:5-6.* Why should we trust that God is for us when circumstances seem to indicate otherwise?
5. What keeps you from being painfully honest in your prayers?
6. How has God demonstrated his goodness to you? How has He shown that He can be trusted?
7. How does your view of God influence the way you interpret your circumstances?
8. What would change in your life if you truly believed that God could be trusted—that He really is good, caring, and in control?

GOING DEEPER

1. Has there been a time in your life when things seemed to go wrong without any reason? Did you seek to blame something or someone, find a *reason* for the suffering, or have someone minimize the hurt with a simplistic explanation or trite phrase?
2. Have you ever felt like suffering and grief do not have a place in the Christian life?
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Psalm 143:4-7.* How does King David deal with hardship? Does he try to minimize the reality of his suffering or does he bring his struggles openly and honestly to God?
4. After voicing his concerns and struggles to God, what does David do in Psalm 143:8-10? In the end, what does David decide to do? What does he rely on in his suffering and hardship?
5. Do your prayers ever hold the honesty and brokenness of David in Psalm 143? Are you willing to call out to God even when hardship is all you seem to know? Is God who you turn to or who you blame in the midst of struggle? How could you begin to become more honest with God?
6. How could your relationship with God change if you began to be more open and honest with God, even during times of struggle and hardship? What should you do to put cliché prayers behind you, and begin addressing God honestly?

MOVING FORWARD

What is something that you need to bring to God with greater honesty? As you go through this week, try to intentionally pray an honest prayer every day.

Are there any circumstances in your past or in your present that you still don't understand? Why would God have allowed them? Do you see a possible purpose in them, or will you have to continue to trust Him?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

How can you remind yourself that God can be trusted the next time you are surrounded by difficult circumstances?

Pray that God would continue to be with us, even in the midst of hardships and suffering. Pray that you would have the courage, and trust in God to be honest with him. May our honesty draw us ever closer to the God who loved us enough to send his Son, Jesus, to suffer with us and for us.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

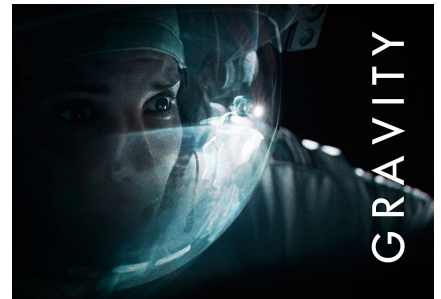
But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me. Psalm 13:5-6

EXTRA FUN ACTIVITY

Watch *Gravity* together as a group and discuss the following questions afterwards:

Sandra Bullock stars in the movie *Gravity*, and is about a female astronaut Dr. Ryan Stone, who is adrift in space. At one pivotal point in the movie, Bullock's character Ryan who has been adrift in space finally gets to a space capsule that she believes will take her back to earth only to discover the capsule doesn't have enough oxygen to return her back to Earth. She's finally comprehending that she isn't going to make it out of this alive. She tries contacting NASA, but the antenna is damaged. For much of the film she is beyond radio contact, however as *Gravity* nears the finale, in an attempt to reach Mission Control, she winds up speaking with an Inuit ice-fisherman in Greenland.

They don't speak the same language. She feels completely alone. She doesn't know how to pray. Prayer to her is as foreign as talking to an Inuit ice-fisherman in Greenland—in a language that she can't understand.



1. Do you agree with this statement: *Prayer doesn't really need to be taught.* Why do you agree or disagree?
2. If you think about it, Prayer doesn't require training, like being an astronaut. It doesn't require a manual, like flying a spacecraft. It simply requires a heart willing speak honestly to God. Prayer is not an interview of God, or a speech to God, it is a conversation with God. Listen for what He has to say back to you.
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Philippians 4:6-7.* What does this verse say about prayer? Do you think it is realistic to *be anxious about nothing*?
4. Is there a cause and effect between *being anxious, praying, and finding peace*?

Prayer means we are never alone

5. Even when we feel we are completely isolated, floating aimlessly through space, prayer is our lifeline to God. God hears and answers our prayers. Those answers might not always be what we expect, but they are what God knows is best for us.
6. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Deuteronomy 31:6.* What encouragement is Moses giving Joshua? Do you think Joshua was being *strong and courageous*, or do you think he was *afraid and terrified*? What do you base your answer on? Why do you think Moses was having to tell Joshua these things?
7. What promise is found in Deuteronomy 31:6? What promise is found in Romans 8:38-39? How are these similar? How are they different?