

3 WEEKS

DISAPPOINTED WITH GOD



© Copyright 2020. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

SiiKA Photo/Shutterstock

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 1

Walking with a Limp..... 4

WEEK 2

From Doubt to Certainty 6

WEEK 3

Ministry out of Pain..... 10

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group..... 14

Group Agreement 15

WALKING WITH A LIMP

WEEK 1

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What do you feel is your greatest weakness?

BIG IDEA:

Sometimes we have a “thorn in the flesh” that God will use in our life.

Key Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“...because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect

in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Genesis 32:22-32

“That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied,

"I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon."

Discussion:

Read the Key Scriptures for this week and discuss the following:

1. If you could ask God to remove anything from your life, what would it be and why?
2. When you think about your "thorn", and despite the challenges of that, how have you seen God's grace at work in the midst of that struggle?
3. What was Paul's conclusion

about his own thorn? How might you relate?

4. Has there ever been a time in your life where you feel you've struggled with God?
5. Jacob struggled with God, and was left with a limp as a result – a visible reminder of his struggle. What do you suppose that limp represented to Jacob?
6. Jacob's overcoming resulted in the nation of Israel being grown and established. What might be the result of your own personal struggle?
7. How do you see God's strength being made perfect in your weakness? Are there areas to surrender to Him that He might show His mighty power?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together as a group for your individual thorns or struggles. Help one another to see an eternal perspective of these struggles.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our team currently ministering in Tanzania.

Memory Verse:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 1 Corinthians 12:9

FROM DOUBT TO CERTAINTY

WEEK 2

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

When did you first become aware of the fact that life isn't fair?

BIG IDEA:

From our perspective, life doesn't always make sense, but God's perspective changes that.

Key Scriptures:

Page 8-9

Discussion:

1. Read Psalm 73 (Pg 8-9). Let's face it. Life isn't always fair. And when we see or experience injustice in the world, it can cause us to doubt God's goodness and His sovereignty. Share some examples of those injustices that you see or have experienced that have caused you to wonder where God is?
2. Which of these are the most grievous to you?

3. What injustices did the psalmist observe and struggle with?
4. To what conclusion does the psalmist come regarding these worldly injustices?
5. According to these passages, what brought him to those conclusions? (hint: vs. 16-17, 21-22)
6. What do you learn about your own doubts and struggles as a result of reading this passage?

Wrapping It Up:

In the message, we learned that doubt is only a problem when you run away from it; but when you face it God grows you stronger. Resolve to face your doubts head on and with honesty and transparency before God, just as the psalmist did.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our Starting Point groups as they wrestle with possible doubts and questions of faith.

Memory Verse:

"Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:25-26



**KEY
SCRIPTURES**

PSALM 73

Surely God is good to Israel,

to those who are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;

I had nearly lost my foothold.

3 For I envied the arrogant

when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 They have no struggles;

their bodies are healthy and strong.

5 They are free from common human burdens;

they are not plagued by human ills.

6 Therefore pride is their necklace;

they clothe themselves with violence.

7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity;

their evil imaginations have no limits.

8 They scoff, and speak with malice;

with arrogance they threaten oppression.

9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven,

and their tongues take possession of the earth.

10 Therefore their people turn to them

and drink up waters in abundance.

11 They say, "How would God know?

Does the Most High know anything?"

12 This is what the wicked are like—

always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure

and have washed my hands in innocence.

14 All day long I have been afflicted,

and every morning brings new punishments.

15 If I had spoken out like that,
I would have betrayed your children.
16 When I tried to understand all this,
it troubled me deeply
17 till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.
18 Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.
19 How suddenly are they destroyed,
completely swept away by terrors!
20 They are like a dream when one awakes;
when you arise, Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.
21 When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,
22 I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.
23 Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
24 You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.
27 Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.
28 But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.

**MY FLESH AND MY
HEART MAY FAIL,
BUT GOD IS THE
STRENGTH OF MY
HEART
AND MY PORTION
FOREVER.**

MINISTRY OUT OF PAIN

WEEK 3

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What's your favorite ministry at Sunnybrook?

BIG IDEA:

God comforts us in
our pain that we might
comfort others.

Key Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted,

it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path.”

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans that I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Discussion:

1. Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-11. How many times does the word comfort appear in this passage?
2. What do you learn about comfort from this passage and how have you seen that played out in your own life?
3. The apostle Paul speaks of suffering, even to the point of despairing of life itself. What reason does he give for this suffering?
4. Discuss how and where you have received comfort in your own life in the midst of suffering.

5. In what ways has your suffering equipped you to comfort others?
6. Paul says, "For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ." Describe how your suffering has impacted your relationship with Christ.
7. Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and Jeremiah 29:11. How do these passages give a greater perspective in the midst of suffering?

Wrapping It Up:

Consider who you know who is currently suffering that you may be able to comfort because of the comfort you have received. Pray for them in your group and reach out to them this week with words of comfort.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those who are walking through our Griefshare support group.

Memory Verse:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4



NOTES:

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



SUNNYBROOK
community church

5601 Sunnybrook Drive
Sioux City, Iowa 51106
www.sunnybrookchurch.org