

Small Group Discussion Guide

"Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Trusting God in Impossible Situations"

Based on Exodus 12-14

OPENING PRAYER & ICEBREAKER (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt "stuck" between two difficult choices. How did you navigate that situation?

SERMON RECAP (5 minutes)

This week's sermon explored the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Red Sea, focusing on three key moments:

1. **The Unleavened Bread** - Removing sin from our lives
2. **What's in a Name** - The significance of Succoth and Etham
3. **Between a Rock and a Hard Place** - When God leads us to impossible situations

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part 1: The Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:14-20)

1. **What does leaven (yeast) represent in Scripture, and why did God command the Israelites to remove it from their homes?**
2. **Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.** What are some examples of "old leaven" in our modern lives that we need to remove? How do we practically do this?
3. **The pastor mentioned keeping a "short list" with Jesus regarding our sins (1 John 1:9).** What prevents us from confessing quickly? How can we develop this habit?

4. **Reflection:** Is there any "leaven" in your life right now that's affecting your fellowship with God or others? What would it look like to remove it this week?

Part 2: What's in a Name - Succoth and Etham

5. **Succoth means "temporary shelters."** How does viewing our earthly life as temporary change the way we approach our daily struggles and decisions?
6. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:1 and Hebrews 11:9-10.** Abraham lived in tents while looking for a permanent city. How can we live with this same "pilgrim mentality" in our modern context?
7. **Etham means "wall" or "fortification" and represents a boundary location.** Have you experienced an "Etham moment" - a point of no return in your faith journey? What was that like?
8. **The Israelites stood "on the edge of the wilderness" - a moment of decision.** What "wilderness" might God be calling you to step into right now?

Part 3: Between a Rock and a Hard Place (Exodus 14:1-12)

9. **God told the Israelites to turn back toward Egypt, which seemed counterintuitive.** When has God led you in a direction that didn't make sense at the time? What did you learn?
10. **Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.** Paul says God puts us in impossible situations so we'll trust Him, not ourselves. Why is this necessary for our spiritual growth?
11. **The Israelites complained to Moses when they saw Pharaoh's army approaching.** How do we typically respond when our prayers seem unanswered or when circumstances get worse after we pray?
12. **God placed His cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptian army.** How does God "stand between" us and our enemies today? Can you share a personal example?

Part 4: Faith in Impossible Circumstances

13. **Read Romans 4:18-21 about Abraham's faith.** What does it mean to be "fully assured that what God has promised, He is able to perform"?

14. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-9. Which phrase resonates most with your current situation?*

- Afflicted but not crushed
- Perplexed but not despairing
- Persecuted but not forsaken
- Struck down but not destroyed

15. The pastor mentioned the prayer wall and how sometimes God answers differently than we expect. Have you experienced a prayer being answered in an unexpected way? How did that grow your faith?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

✓ **Unleavened Bread = Removing Sin:** We must actively remove sin from our lives and keep a short account with God.

✓ **Temporary Dwelling:** Our earthly life is temporary; we're pilgrims journeying toward our eternal home.

✓ **Etham Moments:** God brings us to decision points where we must choose to trust Him and move forward.

✓ **Impossible Situations:** God sometimes leads us to places where only He can provide the solution, teaching us dependence.

✓ **Faith Over Sight:** We must trust God's promises even when circumstances suggest otherwise.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week, I Will:

Choose one or more to focus on:

- **Confession Practice:** Set a daily reminder to practice 1 John 1:9 - confessing sins immediately rather than letting them accumulate.

- **Leaven Inventory:** Identify one area of "old leaven" in my life (a habit, relationship, entertainment, thought pattern) and take concrete steps to remove it.
- **Prayer Wall Participation:** Write a prayer request and commit to praying for others' requests, leaving notes to encourage them.
- **Perspective Shift:** When facing a difficult situation this week, ask "What is God trying to teach me?" before asking "How do I get out of this?"
- **Faith Declaration:** Memorize Romans 4:21 or 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 to speak truth when circumstances feel overwhelming.
- **Pilgrim Mindset:** Make one decision this week based on eternal values rather than temporary comfort.

PRAYER REQUESTS & CLOSING (15 minutes)

Sharing Time:

- Is anyone currently in an "Etham moment" - standing at the edge of the wilderness?
- Does anyone feel stuck between a rock and a hard place right now?
- Where do you need to see God part the waters in your life?

Group Prayer Focus:

- Pray for faith to trust God in impossible situations
- Pray for courage to remove "leaven" from our lives
- Pray for those who feel stuck or confused about God's direction
- Thank God that He stands between us and our enemies

Closing Prayer: *"Heavenly Father, help us to trust You when we can't see the way forward. Give us faith to believe Your promises even when circumstances suggest otherwise. Remove the leaven from our lives and help us walk as pilgrims toward our eternal home. When we're between a rock and a hard place, remind us that You are with us, leading us, and working all things for our good. In Jesus' name, amen."*

LOOKING AHEAD

Next Week: The Parting of the Red Sea - God's Ultimate Deliverance

Preparation: Read Exodus 14:13-31 and reflect on areas where you need God to make a way where there seems to be no way.

LEADER NOTES

- **Time Management:** This guide contains more questions than most groups can cover. Select 8-10 questions that best fit your group's needs.
- **Vulnerable Sharing:** Questions 14-15 invite personal testimony. Create a safe space by sharing your own story first.
- **Prayer Wall:** If your church has a prayer wall, bring it up and encourage participation.
- **Follow-up:** Consider texting group members mid-week to check on their "Practical Applications" progress.